



OUR PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH

HANOI - 1976

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Second Edition (Revised and Enlarged)

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE

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***T**HIS booklet is the translation of a report by the Committee for the Study of the History of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, published in 1975.*

Its aim is to provide a few landmarks for a study of the life and work of our venerated President Ho Chi Minh.

It is only a document that we present to the reader, pending a more detailed biography.

We also publish, by way of introduction, the speech delivered by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong on May 19, 1970, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the birth of President Ho Chi Minh.

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**PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH,
SYMBOL OF OUR NATION,
CONSCIENCE OF OUR TIME**

Speech delivered by Premier Pham Van Dong,
on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of
President Ho Chi Minh's birth (May 19, 1970)

Half a century ago, in the long night of slavery, the magnificent name of Nguyen Ai Quoc resounded in the hearts of many Vietnamese as a source of confidence and a call to arms. Since then, President Ho Chi Minh and our people have shared weal and woe in the course of a protracted, arduous and glorious revolutionary struggle. His sentiments towards our people and theirs for him set up a model relationship between the leader and the masses, which reflects the noble spirit of Marxism-Leninism and, at the same time, bears the imprint of the deep feelings of our people.

For the entire Vietnamese people, who have been perseveringly and dauntlessly struggling for their great revolutionary cause, President Ho Chi Minh is

the supreme commander and closest companion, who infuses confidence into all our fighters and countrymen. His presence is felt in every Vietnamese home, like a father's by his children. For all Vietnamese, Uncle Ho personifies the extremely pure and bright conscience that thoroughly understands every one of their thoughts and aspirations.

In the days of the greatest sorrow for our nation, when President Ho Chi Minh departed from this world, all of us shared the same feeling, the same thought : our Uncle Ho is not dead : he will live for ever with our mountains and our rivers, in our revolutionary cause, and in the hearts of our people.

Generation after generation will transmit to posterity our boundless love for President Ho Chi Minh, the incarnation of independence, freedom and happiness, those deep aspirations of the Vietnamese people. President Ho Chi Minh is the founder of our Party, and together with the Party, he mobilized our people to rise up and be masters of their destiny, and organized and led them to develop their forces and win victory after victory. The best virtues of our nation forged in the course of 4,000 years of history have been revived and have shown greater vitality than ever in the Ho Chi Minh era. Every success recorded by our people in the past forty years as well as each change in the life of every Vietnamese — ranging from the present independence, freedom and international position of the Fatherland to his own bowl of rice, his clothes and his right to live and be master of his destiny—is closely bound to Uncle Ho.

Likewise, all our present successes and the complete victory of our nation in the struggle against US aggression, for national salvation, and in socialist construction in the northern part of our country, are inseparable from President Ho Chi Minh's name and work.

He devoted his whole heart and mind to the Vietnamese people and also to the proletariat and the oppressed peoples all over the world. The battle he fought, the life he lived, his achievements so full of significance, and his pure internationalist feelings have won admiration and love from the world's peoples, from Communists in all continents, from the people of the socialist countries, the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples, the working people in Western countries, and all men of conscience in the world. The whole of mankind deeply mourns for the leader of our nation, an exemplary fighter in the international communist movement and the national liberation movement of this century.

In today's world, which is seething with revolution, opposing the old and demanding the new, President Ho Chi Minh is a symbol of the times, of the trend of our era and the strength that is impelling it forward. He symbolizes the road of revolutionary struggle in our epoch, the struggle for independence, freedom and socialism ; he personifies that struggle itself and its success.

Among the people of this world, whether living in the same country or in different countries, there

are many diversities and even radical differences, regarding their living conditions, ideal in life, level of knowledge, and political, social and religious beliefs. But provided they are not oppressors, exploiters and aggressors, or their henchmen, every one of them can find in President Ho Chi Minh's life and struggle the things they have been aspiring for, the moral values they cherish and the goals they long to attain.

There lie the source and significance of the world's peoples' feelings towards President Ho Chi Minh. And because he has always identified himself with our Party and our people, the world's peoples feel the same way towards the Vietnamese people, who, under the leadership of our Party, are standing on the front-line of the struggle against the U.S. imperialist aggressors, for the independence and freedom of our Fatherland, and for the lofty goals of mankind.

A GREAT HISTORIC MISSION

Lenin said: "The basic thing in the doctrine of Marx is that it brings out the world historic role of the proletariat as the builder of a socialist society."

Marx said: "By carrying out this earth-shaking revolution, the proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains; they have a world to win." He made this appeal: "Workingmen of all countries, unite!"

Carrying on Marx's work, Lenin developed the Marxist doctrine in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. To fulfil the historic mission of

the proletariat according to Marx's prediction of genius, Lenin made this appeal: "Proletarians and oppressed peoples all over the world, unite!"

Continuing the work of Marx and Lenin, creatively applying the doctrine of Marx and Lenin in the context of the general crisis of capitalism and the world revolutionary high tide, President Ho Chi Minh founded, organized, educated and led our Party — the political party of the working class, the Party of the Vietnamese nation — which, after fifteen years of persistent and dauntless struggle, victoriously accomplished the August Revolution — the archetype of a people's national democratic revolution in a colonial and semi-feudal country — founded the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the first worker-peasant State in Southeast Asia, and proceeded to fulfil the historic mission of the proletariat in our country, thus greatly contributing to the revolutionary cause of the world's peoples.

At the beginning of this century, President Ho Chi Minh, then a young son of a patriotic family living in an area known for its unflagging revolutionary tradition, saw the impasse in which the revolutionary movements of the previous decades had ended. In spite of the great valour of their participants, they had invariably ended in failure, following bloody repressions. President Ho Chi Minh left his homeland in search of a new horizon, his heart full of patriotic fervour. He went to many places in the world, did many jobs to earn a living while carrying out his revolutionary activities and steeled himself

in contact with the sufferings and the revolutionary struggle of the working class and oppressed peoples in the five continents. He discovered Lenin, the leader of genius of the revolution, by reading his works, which moved him to tears. He greeted the October Revolution, the dawn of mankind, took part in founding the French Communist Party, founded the *Union intercoloniale* and actively militated in the Communist International, especially at its 5th Congress. From the Soviet Union he went to China, participated in the revolutionary high tide in Canton and founded the Union of Oppressed Asian Peoples. In Canton, he organized many training courses for young Vietnamese revolutionaries, founded the Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth Association, predecessor of the Indochinese Communist Party. On February 3, 1930, President Ho Chi Minh founded the Indochinese Communist Party, a party armed with Marxism-Leninism and having close ties with the worker and peasant masses, the organizer of all victories of our people.

Since then, President Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary activity was closely associated with our Party's and both were closely linked with the struggle of our people.

During his militant years abroad, all his mind and energies were turned to his beloved Fatherland, and his thoughts were constantly with his compatriots. He seized every opportunity and sought every possible way and means to keep in touch with the revolutionary movement at home, to encourage the people of various strata, especially the workers, peasants and

youth, to rise up in struggle. The name of Nguyen Ai Quoc, the paper *Le Paria* and the book *Le Procès de la colonisation française* (French Colonization on Trial) will for ever remind us of a very significant period in his revolutionary activity.

Evolving from ardent patriotism to Marxism-Leninism, the result being patriotism imbued with Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism — such was the road taken by President Ho Chi Minh. Such has also been the revolutionary course taken by our people, a course closely linked with the revolutionary cause of the world's peoples, the revolutionary cause of our times.

*

President Ho Chi Minh and our Party have correctly and creatively applied the Marxist-Leninist doctrine to the concrete conditions of our country in working out our people's revolutionary line and leading their revolutionary struggle to victory.

That is the line of people's national democratic revolution advancing to socialist revolution without going through the stage of capitalist development.

In the 40 years since the presentation of the Outline Political Program and Outline Strategy by President Ho Chi Minh at the founding congress of the Party, and the Political Theses of the Party drafted by Comrade Tran Phu, President Ho Chi Minh and our Party have led the Vietnamese people from one great victory to another. Those are glorious pages in the history of the Vietnamese nation, shining with

revolutionary heroism. Those are the results of the creative application to the specific conditions of our country of the laws governing the revolutionary process taking place in our times, which pushed our revolution unceasingly and vigorously forward and caused it to make marvellous leaps.

As far back as the days he spent in Europe, President Ho Chi Minh already had a clear vision of the revolutionary tasks of our people and the road they should take.

In many articles and speeches, he affirmed his belief that revolutionary storms would rise in Viet Nam and many other colonial countries and would sweep away the reactionary and brutal domination by the colonialists and feudalists, bring independence and freedom to these countries and take them straight to socialism. At the same time, he clearly saw the close relations between the revolution in the colonial countries and that in capitalist countries. He described capitalism as a leech with two suckers, one clinging to the working class in the capitalist countries and the other to the colonial peoples. Hence, he advocated a joint struggle of the colonial peoples and the working class in the capitalist countries, in order to cut both suckers of the capitalist leech.

Under the glorious banner of President Ho Chi Minh and the Party, the working class and the peasantry, closely united in the worker-peasant alliance and on that basis achieving broad union with patriotic and progressive popular strata in the national united front, stood up to carry out a resolute, persistent and

thoroughly revolutionary struggle. Facing innumerable difficulties and sacrifices, applying all forms of political and armed struggle that are the most appropriate to the political situation in each time and place, the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary forces in our country grew up unceasingly. When the glorious Soviet Army defeated the German, Italian and Japanese fascists, brilliantly ending the Second World War, President Ho Chi Minh and our Party mobilized the entire people in time for a general insurrection. In the autumn of 1945, the August Revolution triumphed, putting an end to the 80-year-old French colonialist regime and to age-old feudalism, leading to the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, a unified country stretching from Lang Son to Cape Ca Mau, and ushering in a new era in the history of our country, an era of independence and freedom and advance to socialism.

On September 2, 1945, President Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence which said, "Viet Nam has the right to be a free and independent country and in fact it is so already. The entire Vietnamese people are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their independence and liberty."

"To safeguard independence and liberty" meant to prepare to resist the French colonialists' attempt to invade our country once again. Only a few months after September 2, 1945, the war of resistance against French colonialism broke out.

Let us listen again to the sacred appeal made by President Ho Chi Minh at that time : "We would rather sacrifice everything than lose our country and be enslaved. Men and women, old and young, regardless of religious creed, political party or nationality, all Vietnamese must stand up to fight the French colonialists to save the Fatherland. Those who have rifles will use their rifles, those who have swords will use their swords ; those who have no swords will use spades, hoes or sticks. Everyone must endeavour to oppose the colonialists and save his country.

" Whatever hardships we may have to endure in the war of resistance, with our determination to make all necessary sacrifices, victory will surely be ours ! "

Fought with mere bamboo spears at the beginning, our great national war of resistance ended with the historic Dien Bien Phu victory. In 1949, while we were stepping up our war of resistance, an international event of paramount importance occurred : the victory of the Chinese Revolution and the founding of the People's Republic of China struck a deadly blow at imperialism, tipped the world balance of power in favour of the revolutionary forces and gave strong encouragement to the peoples of the world. For Viet Nam, the success of the Chinese Revolution put an end to the imperialist blockade and linked our revolution with the socialist camp. In the wake of the Dien Bien Phu victory, the Geneva Conference convened in 1954 recognized the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Viet Nam

and of our two neighbours, Cambodia and Laos, and at the same time stipulated that general elections would be held in July 1956 to reunify Viet Nam.

That was a tremendous victory for our people, an obvious defeat for French and US imperialism. Our enemies admitted defeat, but in fact they, first of all US imperialism, regarded it only as a delaying tactic. The French colonialists, compelled to withdraw from the southern part of our country, paved the way for the US imperialists to move in.

The second war of resistance, fought against US aggression, for national salvation, broke out. This time we are fighting against the US imperialists, who have enormous economic and military potential and whose power is seemingly invincible. Taking part in the US imperialists' war of aggression against our country are also troops of a number of satellite countries of the USA such as South Korea, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, etc.

Braving countless difficulties and sacrifices, our people have attacked the enemy continually and have inflicted on him one defeat after another. Not reconciling himself to failure, the enemy has escalated the war, only to find himself, at each new rung of his escalation, confronted with an armed force and a people who have grown even more battle-hardened and stronger in all fields, who are dealing them staggering blows and driving them into an ever more passive posture. As a result, the USA is facing an unprecedented crisis right at home and countless difficulties in all parts of the world.

In that long and glorious fight, the appeals of President Ho Chi Minh instilled marvellous strength into our combatants and people and brought the revolutionary heroism of our whole nation to a peak. Let us listen again to the appeal he issued on July 17, 1966, when the US imperialists were making all-out efforts to intensify their limited war in the South and their war of destruction in the North: "The US imperialists may bring in 500,000 troops, one million or even more to step up their war of aggression in South Viet Nam. They may use thousands of aircraft for intensified attacks against North Viet Nam. But never will they be able to break the iron resolve of the heroic Vietnamese people to fight against US aggression, for national salvation... Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom. When victory comes, our people will rebuild our country and make it even greater and more beautiful."

In the North, following the victory of the war of resistance against French colonialism, under the guidance of President Ho Chi Minh and our Party, our people immediately switched to the socialist revolution. However, never in the past 16 years has the North been able to focus all its efforts on building a new life. Nevertheless, socialist transformation and socialist construction have recorded big successes. Even in the years of resistance to US imperialists' war of destruction, the building of socialism continued to be speeded up, the economic and defence forces of socialist North Viet Nam were strengthened markedly, truly turning it into a solid base for the

revolution in the whole country, a great rear base for the South, and linking the war of resistance of our people with the socialist camp and the whole of progressive mankind.

Our people are very courageous, intelligent, creative, hard-working and eager to learn and to make progress. Such a people, had they not been compelled to spend all their energies fighting against foreign aggression, had they been given the chance of building their country in peace, would certainly have recorded, in the past 25 years, many great and fine achievements in all spheres — economic, cultural, scientific and technical.

President Ho Chi Minh often said: "Our Party is truly great! The Vietnamese people are truly heroic!"

That greatness and heroism was fully and vividly brought out in the speech delivered by Comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, on the occasion of the 40th founding anniversary of the Party. That speech was a review of the rich experience accumulated in the course of nearly half a century of glorious revolutionary struggle of our people under the leadership of President Ho Chi Minh and the Party.¹

Our Party is great in that it has developed to the highest degree the strength of the militant soli-

1. Le Duan: *The Vietnamese Revolution — Fundamental Problems, Essential Tasks*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi 1970.

clarity of the entire Vietnamese people and all the fine age-old traditions of our nation. The past revives, more resplendent than ever, in the epic of the present, and the present is sowing precious seeds for a bright future.

The present revolutionary struggle has brought out the fine qualities of the Vietnamese nation. In the process of defending and building the country, our people have acquired invaluable virtues: love for their country and fellow-countrymen, national consciousness, spirit of independence and sovereignty, firm fighting will — “rather die than be enslaved” — magnanimity, loyalty, etc. Our nation was formed very early in history and became a unified state even under the feudal regime, unlike many other lands, for instance in Europe, where not until the appearance of capitalism did nation and state take shape. Having to struggle constantly for self-preservation and development, our people have brought into full play the strength of the masses from the village to the national level, and have forged for themselves such qualities as industry, courage, intelligence, creativeness, and love for the noble virtues of man and of social life.

The whole of their historical past had prepared the Vietnamese people to receive and rapidly absorb the revolutionary ideal of the time. President Ho Chi Minh was the first Vietnamese to find that ideal in Lenin's Theses on the Colonial and the National Questions. He said, “What emotion, what enthusiasm,

what lucidity and what faith it gave me! I was moved to tears.” Obviously, he was expressing the deep aspiration of the entire Vietnamese people.

From then on, President Ho Chi Minh had a clear idea of the road to follow: to proceed to found the Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, which would unite around it the labouring people and the entire Vietnamese nation, and to stand up to struggle for the fulfilment of the great historic mission of winning back independence and freedom and advancing to socialism.

The revolutionary cause of our people is an integral part of the world revolution. The world revolution is one of the factors in the victory of our people. Conversely, our victory is a great contribution to the victory of the world revolution. This contribution consists in fighting and defeating imperialism, essentially US imperialism. It is a contribution of far-reaching international significance, highly valued by the world's peoples, including progressive people in the United States. That contribution also consists of the correct line on world affairs of our Party, based on Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, which has led to the formation of a world people's front in support of Viet Nam against US aggression. This is a valuable experience, a fine model of international solidarity in the interest of the common revolutionary cause. To the oppressed peoples and the countries of the “Third World” embracing more than two-thirds of mankind, that contribution consists in showing them the revolution-

ary path leading from the people's national democratic revolution to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development, the path of staunch, indomitable, persistent and protracted struggle, the path which for all its twists and bends will certainly lead to victory, the path of struggle for the independence of the nation and the freedom of the people, the path of resistance to imperialism and colonialism old and new, with a view to building socialism, the ideal of mankind.

The revolutionary struggle of our people has demonstrated to the world's peoples, to all men, the might of justice, the most precious values of mankind, the noble qualities and virtues of man, and brought enlightenment, ideal in life, and faith to hundreds of millions of people in the world.

While performing the historic mission of the proletariat in our country, President Ho Chi Minh, our Party and our people have always endeavoured to contribute their utmost to the fulfilment by the proletariat in other countries of its historic mission in the present era, the era of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale.

A STRATEGIST OF GENIUS

The revolutionary line of the Party, which advocates advancing from the people's national democratic revolution to socialist revolution, has mobilized our people's forces to the fullest extent. On the one hand it shows our people the immediate objectives,

the vital interests of the nation, and on the other, illuminates the road forward and the prospects for building a new, socialist life.

President Ho Chi Minh and our Party have ingeniously led our people to carry out two revolutions: the people's national democratic revolution and the socialist revolution, and between these two there is no boundary either in time or in space. They are interlocked and support each other, the former preparing and promoting the latter, which completes the tasks it leaves unfinished. In the current war of resistance against the US imperialists, when our country is still temporarily divided into two zones with different political systems, our Party has applied the strategy of people's national democratic revolution in the South and that of socialist revolution in the North. The resistance against US aggression, for national salvation, means a struggle to liberate the South, defend and build the socialist North and ultimately achieve peaceful reunification of the country.

In this revolutionary process, President Ho Chi Minh and our Party have skilfully applied various forms of struggle, clandestine and open, legal and illegal, depending on the situation in each place and each period, using revolutionary violence to oppose and defeat counter-revolutionary violence.

The Vietnamese people's resistance against the US aggressors, for national salvation, is a revolutionary struggle of historic and international significance. It is the revolutionary struggle of our time and consti-

tutes the frontline and climax of the revolutionary struggle of the world's peoples at present. Over the past quarter century it has been an extremely arduous and fierce war. To carry out that revolutionary struggle, President Ho Chi Minh and our Party have applied a strategy which has been proved by practice to be fully judicious and clear-sighted, with the result that we have won, are winning, and will certainly achieve complete victory.

That strategy applies the laws of historical development in our time, the era of socialist revolution and national-liberation revolution. It applies the laws of people's revolutionary war against the imperialist aggressors, mainly the US imperialists. It embodies military science and art in the kind of war for national liberation and national defence which we have developed to a high level.

That strategy eloquently testifies to the fact that in the present era, the proletariat is shaping the evolution of history and holding the initiative in the international arena.

Such a strategy is first and foremost a strategy of offensive relying on the strength of the million, who are seething with wrath and are resolved to storm the bastion of the enemy and strike him, resolved to seize every opportunity to fight and win.

At the same time, that strategy is one of persistent, protracted, persevering, indomitable and thorough struggle. The imperialist aggressors, relying on the strength of their professional armies equip-

ped with modern weapons, seek a quick victory. In the conditions of our country, to defeat this "blitzkrieg" strategy, we must apply that of protracted fighting, winning more and more victories and growing ever stronger as we fight so as to achieve final victory.

That strategy requires that we mobilize, organize and develop the inexhaustible strength of our entire people, wage a stubborn struggle on a treble front — political, military and diplomatic — with emphasis to be laid on this or that front depending on the circumstances, drive the enemy into an ever more difficult and passive position so as to repel him step by step and defeat him piecemeal before bearing him down completely. That strategy has led to the founding and unceasing development of mighty armed and political forces, pillars of the multiform people's war, in which just a few men can fight many enemy troops and small units can defeat much bigger ones, a war in which both men and terrain fight the enemy, encircling him and rendering him blind and powerless. "Our army, loyal to the Party and devoted to the people, will fulfil any task, overcome any difficulty and defeat any enemy." The enemy here is the imperialist aggressors and their stooges of all kinds. Those words of President Ho Chi Minh, so full of heroic determination, apply not only to all our people's armed forces but also to our entire nation. They express the revolutionary heroism which, daily and hourly in the fighting in the South, is breeding wonderful, hardly imaginable feats of arms.

The strategy of President Ho Chi Minh and our Party embodies our correct internationalist line. Relying mainly on our own militant unity, we constantly strive to enhance our militant solidarity with our two neighbours, Laos and Cambodia; we constantly endeavour to win great and valuable support and assistance from the brother socialist countries, and warm sympathy and support from the oppressed nations, the working class in the capitalist countries, and progressive people in the United States. The strategy of the US imperialists is a global strategy which has become outdated and is going bankrupt. Our strategy stems from the militant solidarity of our people with the proletariat and all the oppressed peoples of the world in resisting the common enemy.

The strategy of President Ho Chi Minh and our Party has brought into full play the strength of the militant solidarity of our people, the Indochinese peoples, the people of the socialist countries, and the people of the whole world. This is the determining factor in all successes of the revolutionary cause. President Ho Chi Minh often said: "Unity, unity, great unity; success, success, great success."

President Ho Chi Minh and our Party are indeed strategists of genius.

That genius lies in the application of this guideline: "Knowing both the enemy and ourselves, we can win every battle." The economic and military potential of the US imperialists, big as it is, is not limitless. The US imperialists are going downhill,

and will certainly meet with total defeat. For our part, more than ever before, we are holding high the "determined-to-fight-and-win" banner of President Ho Chi Minh, firmly believing in the invincible force of our people and, at the same time, relying on the strength of our era, of history.

That genius consists in knowing how to apply the laws of revolutionary struggle against the imperialist aggressors in the present era, getting at the essence of things through phenomena, visualizing the future through the present and knowing the whole world from the experiences of our country.

That genius also lies in the fact that along with a consistent strategy, we know how to apply suitable tactics, exploit the contradictions and all weak points of the enemy, so as to drive him into a position of failure, weakness and serious isolation, hence to defeat him.

The genius of that strategy includes not only determination but also ability to fight and win.

The revolutionary line and strategy of President Ho Chi Minh and our Party are a development of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, a worthy contribution to the treasure of experience of the world revolution concerning a series of very important problems relating to the advance from the people's national democratic revolution to socialist revolution; the path to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development; the use of people's war to fight and defeat the imperialist aggressors; the national-liberation

war in defence of the Fatherland; the building of a new-type Party, the worker-peasant alliance and the national united front; ideological work and the internationalist line leading to the formation of a world people's front against US aggression, in support of Viet Nam. The works written by President Ho Chi Minh, from the beginning of his revolutionary struggle to the recent period, have recorded that process of development and that contribution and clearly reflected the revolutionary struggle and the repeated and ever bigger victories of our Party and people. President Ho Chi Minh and our Party have always applied Lenin's words in a creative way: "Without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement." Our successes in the theoretical domain as well as the victories of our people in the revolutionary struggle are the successes and victories of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the truth of our era and the peak of the human intellect.

THE ORGANIZER OF ALL VICTORIES OF OUR PEOPLE

To win victory, we must not only have a judicious revolutionary line and a correct political and military strategy, but also organize the implementation of this line and this strategy.

We usually say: "The Party is the organizer of all victories of our people." By organization we mean that of the forces and that of the revolutionary struggles.

President Ho Chi Minh founded our Party and, together with it, educated and led our people to make revolution, going from the people's national democratic revolution to socialism.

He founded the National United Front and the People's Army and, after the August Revolution, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, a people's democratic State performing the historic task of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Party, the Front, the Army and the State are organizations with extremely important positions and functions in the whole revolutionary cause of our people. That is why President Ho Chi Minh and our Party have day and night shown great concern for the consolidation of these organizations in all field- and trained them to discharge their heavy responsibilities.

Revolution is the work of the masses. Right from the outset, President Ho Chi Minh and our Party have attached great importance to the founding of organizations of various kinds to rally the masses and give full play to the strength and creativeness of the masses in revolutionary struggle: these are the youth, workers', peasants', women's organizations and many others, as required by the struggle and interests of the masses.

Waging a revolutionary struggle against imperialist aggression in a country like ours requires a judicious combination of political with armed struggle, and the organization of political as well as

armed forces. The revolutionary struggle of our people prior to the August 1945 Revolution, then the war of resistance against the French colonialists and the present war of resistance against US aggression constitute a shining example of how to organize our forces and lead our struggle from victory to victory. The organization of the revolutionary forces and that of the revolutionary struggle must be closely linked together, with the aim of serving strategic goals and requirements in a given place and at a given time. To fight and defeat the enemy, we must, on the one hand, hold the initiative and act on the offensive and, on the other, conduct a protracted fight, so that the more we fight, the stronger we become and the more victories we win before gaining final victory. These strategic ideas, which evince the firmest resolve and perseverance, cannot be applied separately, and must be grasped thoroughly both in organizing the combat forces and in leading the fight.

Lenin said that socialist revolution does not end with the overthrow of the rule of the oppressing and exploiting classes. The overthrow of that rule, which leads to the formation of the people's democratic power assuming the historic task of proletarian dictatorship, is only the first step in socialist transformation and socialist construction.

The socialist regime of North Viet Nam has recorded very great successes which everyone of us has the right to be proud of. In its war of destruction against North Viet Nam, the enemy had wished to bomb us "back to the Stone Age". But our regime

has brought into full play its strength and superiority in fighting and has scored victory after victory. North Viet Nam's economic and national defence potential has increased continually, the people's life has remained stable, and in rural areas where production is well organized, it is even better than in the pre-war period. Under French domination, North Viet Nam's population was about half its present number. Yet, every one of us remembers how destitute the people's life was at that time. At present, everybody has enough food and clothing, everybody can study and make continuous progress. Of course, much more remains to be done so that our entire people can quickly improve their material and cultural life on the basis of increased production. In the cultural and educational fields, we have worked wonders.¹

Meanwhile, in many developed capitalist countries, many people are still illiterate and many children cannot go to school. Thanks to socialist achievements, our people's health has improved remarkably compared with the past, the average life expectancy has quickly increased and the mortality rate of new-born babies has dropped to one of the lowest in the world. Having achieved such results although we started with only our bare hands and have had to fight for decades against foreign aggression, our people feel eternal gratitude to Uncle

1. At present, in North Viet Nam there are 4 million general education pupils: 87,000 university students; 143,000 students of middle-level vocational schools; and over 10,000 students studying abroad. In addition, there are hundreds of thousands of technicians and thousands of scientific researchers.

Ho, and are deeply aware of the clear-sighted leadership of our Party and rightly proud of their own will, energy and creative talent.

However, we must do much more to meet the urgent needs of the people's life and the requirements of the resistance against US aggression, for national salvation, and for the sake of the independence and prosperity of the Fatherland, for the sake of future generations.

To this end, the most essential thing is good management and organization. These two things are closely interrelated.

In order to build socialism, good management is indispensable. Given the conditions of our crop fields, forests, rivers, subsoil resources and sea coasts, and given our labour force and our scientific and technical assets, the question is how to use the productive labour of our people to exploit the natural resources of our country in the most rational manner to meet the goals of the present time and of the near and far future. This means that in the management of the national economy and the people's life, we must make fundamental and all-round calculations, which must have great and long-term strategic significance and at the same time be detailed and practical. This requires a lot of intelligence and wisdom, a lot of experience which we must acquire. Careful calculations are important in that they lead to a balanced disposition of the material and labour forces, throughout our territory as well as in each locality, down to the

basic units — the farming co-ops and factories —, to serve immediate as well as long-term interests so that we can improve our people's life while increasing accumulation for enlarged reproduction. For the first time in human history, socialism has created for man the possibility of disposing the labour force and technical potential in the closest and most adequate relationship with the productive forces on a nation-wide scale, hence to achieve ever higher labour productivity and growing economic efficiency. Calculations aimed at a thorough and wide application of science and technique in the national economy and all aspects of social life will also help increase labour productivity and economic efficiency not merely by a few dozen per cent but many times over.

All these calculations require as much precision as in the case of a natural science. The State plans, both long-term and yearly, and the plans for each branch, each region and each basic unit, must reflect these calculations.

Planning means making calculations for a balanced disposition of material resources and labour force and achieving an all-round balance in many fields. That is a very fundamental and very important content of organizational work. That is also the link between management and organization. Leading a struggle for the realization of a plan requires both organizational and managerial abilities, which are very necessary to all of us, first of all to the responsible comrades in State organs at all levels.

Lenin said: "Communism is Soviet power plus electrification." This stresses the great importance of the State, the direct manager and organizer of all activities of the national economy and of social life under the leadership of the Party.

State plans are operational plans for periods of several years, for each year, each month, even each day. The realization of State plans is a revolutionary struggle aimed at overcoming many difficulties and hardships. It requires energy and tenacity, a spirit of revolutionary offensive, a sense of organization and discipline, and creative talents in many fields. In that revolutionary struggle, each working man and each cadre must strive to carry out the State plans just like a fighter on the battlefield. In the final analysis, in the overthrow of the old social order, in the fight to defeat the imperialist aggressors, in the development of the economy and of culture, and in the building of socialism, man is the decisive factor, and the revolution is the work of the masses.

Ever since socialist construction began in the North, President Ho Chi Minh always stressed the necessity of raising the organizational and managerial capability of the leading Party and State organs, in order to develop the strength of the people to the full. He said, "Let our workers and peasants and our intellectuals be confident that we have the necessary strength, courage and intelligence to build a new life for ourselves. A question of decisive importance is for our cadres and Party members to understand clearly that the new requirement of the revolution

is to develop production, that to raise labour productivity is the greatest source of material wealth. Therefore, we must know how to organize the new production machinery in a practical way, and actively learn to manage the economy and improve techniques. Today, the Party requires from every cadre and Party member not only good political judgment but also professional ability. They cannot exercise leadership in a general way. Only so can we build socialism successfully."

NOBLE VIRTUES

President Ho Chi Minh's great revolutionary work is the continuation and creative development of Marxism-Leninism, in fulfilment of the historic task of the proletariat in the epoch of victory of proletarian revolution in each country and on a world scale. This greatness appears still more clearly and profoundly in his daily life and his personality, which reflect the noble virtues and manner of a leader, a proletarian revolutionary fighter. His life and his lofty thoughts and feelings embody the attributes of a proletarian revolutionary fighter — valiant, undaunted, thorough-going, devoting his whole life to the struggle with the spirit of a victor, the spirit of Marx and Lenin, the spirit of those whose historical task it is to topple the old, capitalist regime and build a new, socialist one, the spirit of the valiant Vietnamese people who are defeating the US imperialist aggressors. President Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary life is a shining example of revolutionary

ardour and resolve, of constancy in good and bad fortune, of perseverance in protracted revolutionary struggle until final victory. As in the case of Marx and Lenin, President Ho Chi Minh's confidence in the certain victory of the revolution stems from his boundless faith in the inexhaustible revolutionary capabilities, the courage and creativeness of the popular masses. His life, his world outlook and his noble virtues constitute a fine and vivid expression of that thorough revolutionary spirit. He often said, "With patriotism even the most difficult work can be done," and "Provided we persevere and never lose heart, we will surely succeed." This means first of all that one must have firm will, ardour, determination and courage. This breeds intelligence, wisdom, ingenuity and resourcefulness. Conversely, intelligence and ingenuity enhance one's determination to fight and win. He often stressed that revolution means hardships and sacrifices and readiness to endure everything for the great cause and for the people's interests, for the Fatherland and for socialism. He often recommended that all of us should do away with individualism to become valiant and undaunted revolutionaries. Only when individualism is overcome can one unite one's comrades and countrymen and acquire a collective spirit and a sense of organization and discipline. All this constitutes our invincible strength in our confrontation with the enemy.

A most important thing that must be underlined is the unity between his momentous revolutionary activities and his very simple life and his modesty.

A truly wonderful fact is that during the sixty years of a stormy life abroad as well as at home, President Ho Chi Minh had kept intact the noble virtues of a revolutionary who devoted his whole life to the country, the people and the great cause, and who always remained pure, simple, perfect.

We all know how simple his personality and his life were: his meals, his belongings, his abode and his way of life. His meals consisted of only a few frugal dishes. He never wasted a single grain of rice. He always finished his meal with his bowl emptied, and the leavings in neat order. This small detail suffices to show how much Uncle Ho valued the fruits of man's labour and respected those who waited upon him. His house on stilts barely consists of a few small rooms. And while his mind and spirit was open to the winds of the time, his small house was also flooded with breeze and sunlight and filled with the scent of flowers from his garden. What a simple and pure life! He worked all day and all his life, attending to the greatest affairs — saving the country and the people — and to the smallest: planting trees, writing a letter to a comrade, talking with children from South Viet Nam or calling at workers' quarters where he inspected working places and dormitories and kitchens as well. He never asked for help for anything he could do by himself. His assistants and aides could be counted on the fingers, and he named them "Truong", "Ky", "Khang", "Chien", "Nhat", "Dinh", "Thang", "Loi". These names grouped

together¹ express our people's determination to fight and win. But let no one think that Uncle Ho modelled himself after an ascetic or a hermit. He lived such a simple and serene life because he shared the stirring and eventful life of the masses and identified himself with the hard and grim struggle of his people. His plain living was in complete harmony with his rich spiritual life, with the highest and most beautiful thoughts, feelings, and spiritual values. This is a truly civilized way of life, of which he set a shining example in today's world.

Throughout the 60 years of his fighting life, President Ho Chi Minh always showed perfect calm and serenity. He remained unperturbed even when the enemy was close; indeed it was actually in those moments of danger that he proved a most lucid, dauntless and determined helmsman, who reassured his companions and weathered all storms. Even in prison, bound hand and foot, this dedicated revolutionary fighter remained cool and self-possessed; and such a frame of mind in such a situation gave birth to most beautiful poems:

*The ancients used to like to sing about natural
beauty:
Snow and flowers, moon and wind, mists, moun-
tains and rivers.
Today we should make poems including iron and
steel,
And poets also should know how to lead an attack.*

1. These eight words mean: "The protracted resistance will surely win." (Tr.)

Freshly released from prison, while practising mountain climbing to recover his strength, he wrote:

*The clouds embrace the peaks, the peaks embrace
the clouds,
The river below shines like a mirror, spotless and
clean.
On the crest of the Western Mountains, my heart
stirs as I wander,
Looking towards the Southern sky and dreaming
of old friends.*

That serenity that equanimity pervades his sacred Testament, and can be felt by all those, both at home and abroad, who read it.

President Ho Chi Minh was simple in his daily life, in his relations with other people, and in his style of work. He was also simple in his speeches and writings because he wanted them to be understood, remembered and acted upon by the masses. In the final analysis, truth, the great truths of our people and of our era, are simple: "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom." "Viet Nam is one, the Vietnamese nation is one. Rivers may dry up, mountains may erode, but that truth will never change." These truths, simple but profound in meaning, once having penetrated the hearts and minds of the millions of people who are waiting for them, will make up an invincible force and constitute revolutionary heroism.

President Ho Chi Minh's great thoughts are also great sentiments. In both his revolutionary activities

and in everyday life, President Ho always treated people and acted in accordance with both reason and sentiment. Uncle Ho showed "boundless affection" to his comrades and fellow-countrymen. His immense love embraced everybody. No one was forgotten or left out. Each was assigned to a combat post and Uncle Ho solicitously looked after his work, life and study. He was exacting in his demands, but affectionate in his guidance.

President Ho gave his love and considerate care to his compatriots of all social strata, men and women, young and old, the minority peoples, the religious communities, Vietnamese nationals abroad. He was especially concerned about the well-being of members of the people's armed forces, who are fighting with self-abnegation at the front; the young people, young pioneers and children, who will carry on the revolutionary cause; the women, who are heroic, undaunted, faithful, and able in both production and fighting; the national minorities who have made and will continue to make valuable contributions to our people's revolutionary cause.

In his heart, our Southern compatriots held a special place. His greatest moments were when he received news of victories from the South. He was deeply grieved whenever he thought of the sufferings of our compatriots in the South. He carefully recorded the feats of arms of our Southern fighters, especially those of the young people and children. He used to tell foreign visitors of these wonderful exploits and his face would glow with happiness.

Every Tet, when he read out his New Year's wishes broadcast over the radio in the form of a poem, he was well aware that the people in the whole country were listening to him. He also knew very well that the people and fighters in the South were listening all the more attentively, with all their hearts, as if he were talking directly to each of them.

Like Lenin, he had boundless faith in the masses. His belief in the Vietnamese nation was without limit. He used to quote what the people of Quang Binh and Vinh Linh said in the grimmest days of the fight against the US aggressors: "Without the people, even the easiest work cannot be done. With the people, even the hardest job can be achieved."

All his life, he tried to discover and foster good people and good deeds, and train cadres for the revolutionary cause. The leading body of our Party at present comprises disciples, comrades and fellow-fighters of President Ho, who for dozens of years now have rallied round him and fought as one man, illustrating the unity and oneness of mind of our entire Party and entire people.

Uncle Ho always paid great attention to improving the quality of our Party and that of each of its members. He frequently advised Party members to set good examples in all respects, and attached great importance to their education and training. In his Testament, the first thing he said was about the Party, and how to preserve its "absolute purity."

His noble sentiments were reserved for the world's peoples, those of the socialist countries, those of Cambodia and Laos, as well as of Viet Nam. He was the embodiment of the sincerest and purest proletarian internationalism: "Being a man who has devoted his whole life to the revolution, the more proud I am of the growth of the international communist and workers' movement, the more pained I am by the current discord among the fraternal parties! I wish that our Party will do its best to contribute effectively to the restoration of unity among the fraternal parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism in a way which conforms to both reason and sentiment. I am firmly confident that the fraternal parties and countries will have to unite again."

About his virtues, such teachings of his as "industry, thrift, integrity, uprightness", "total dedication to the public interest and complete selflessness," etc. are often cited. Yet one should understand these noble ideas in a new sense and spirit, in the light of Marxism-Leninism, and according to the communist outlook. We heard him say quite often, and we also read in his Testament, that we must be worthy of our role as the leader and the very loyal servant of the people. These words should be pondered by all of us, especially by responsible comrades in the Party and State machinery from the highest to the lowest level. This is a proletarian revolutionary view, a point of fundamental and profound signifi-

cance on the relationship between the Party and State leadership and the revolutionary cause of the masses. This view must be fully grasped in the revolution in production relations, so that solutions may be found for very important problems, both immediate and long range.

In short, President Ho Chi Minh's life, activities and work as a whole bring out the attributes and virtues of revolutionary fighters in the struggle against the enemy and in the building of a new life. These qualities and virtues are important in that they express the great ideas and great sentiments of revolutionaries and constitute our *raison d'être* and ideal. President Ho Chi Minh used to say that to build socialism there must be socialist people. He greatly valued man because man is the most valuable capital. The fight and victories of our Vietnamese nation in the struggle against US aggression, for national salvation, and in socialist construction are, in the final analysis, a victory of man, who, first of all, must be a revolutionary fighter, firm, undaunted, thorough-going and armed with invincible Marxism-Leninism, and who must always seek to heighten his qualities and virtues. Therefore, we must attach even more importance to training Party members, fighters, the youth, the labouring people, in revolutionary virtues, in accordance with the President's wishes. Ethics must become a branch of social sciences which responsible people must study very carefully. It must be made an indispensable subject in the curricula of both higher and general education. Propaganda

and education organs should thoroughly grasp this in their work. The aim and content of the ideological revolution start and end there.

President Ho Chi Minh was a leader of the Lenin type. He was all the greater for his simplicity. He was the eagle of the Truong Son range¹ whose piercing eyes swept the country from the delta of the Red River—the cradle of the nation—to the Mekong River delta rich in flowers and fruit, and also in talent and valour. His vision embraced the whole world and extended to the bright future of mankind as well as of his own nation.

In his Testament, President Ho Chi Minh said he would go and join Marx and Lenin. People with a poetic turn of mind can picture to themselves what a wonderful meeting this would be! But is it not true that real life is always richer than anything that could be imagined? In life, in the everyday revolutionary struggle in our country, isn't Uncle Ho constantly in the company of Marx and Lenin in the Party's line and in our people's revolutionary struggle and in the heart and mind of every Vietnamese?

LIVE, FIGHT, WORK AND STUDY AFTER THE
EXAMPLE SET BY OUR GREAT UNCLE HO

Celebrating President Ho Chi Minh's 80th birthday, our entire Party, army and people think of him with boundless gratitude, pride and love. On this

1. Stalin described Lenin as the "eagle of the mountains".
(Ed.)

occasion, we feel all the more clearly that Uncle Ho is still among us, leading us in the fight which is going on. Our successes in the struggle against US aggression, for national salvation, and in socialist construction in North Viet Nam since September last year, show that our entire people and Party are marching forward with growing courage and resolve to carry on the great work of President Ho Chi Minh. Let every Vietnamese these days read again his Testament to be imbued even more thoroughly with his thoughts and sentiments, feel himself more mature, and be prepared for new, harder battles in order to achieve new, greater successes. Let all of us these days renew the sacred vows we made to the soul of President Ho Chi Minh!

To fulfil these five pledges means to live, fight, work, and study after the example of our great Uncle Ho, to become undaunted revolutionaries fighting all our lives with self-abnegation for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, for the happiness of the people, and for our noble internationalist duty.

To live up to these five oaths means to step up and accomplish the two revolutions — the people's national democratic revolution, and the socialist revolution — charted by him for our people in the very first days of our struggle.

The struggle against US aggression, for national salvation, is unfolding as predicted by Uncle Ho in his Testament: "The war of resistance against US aggression may drag on. Our fellow-countrymen may have to face new sacrifices of life and property.

Whatever happens we must keep firm our resolve to fight the US aggressors till total victory." The Nixon administration's words and deeds prove the utter obduracy and perfidy of the US imperialists, who are frantically carrying out the "Vietnamization" plan by trying to strengthen the puppet army, bolster the puppet administration and prolong their war of aggression in the South of our country. Now our people's struggle against US aggression, for national salvation, is facing a new situation—the massive aggression by the US imperialists against Cambodia—which has expanded the war to the whole of Indochina and posed a great danger to the peace and security of the nations in Southeast Asia. This is an extremely cynical and impudent challenge to our people, to the peoples of Cambodia and Laos, and to the peoples of all countries of the world.

As an answer to this challenge, a Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples was convened, marking a new development of historic significance in the militant solidarity uniting the peoples of the three countries, who devotedly support and help one another and victoriously fight together against the common enemy—the US imperialists and their lackeys. In Cambodia, the people of all strata are rising up everywhere, resolutely and vigorously, fighting in unity under the patriotic banner of Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk, Chairman of the National United Front of Cambodia, to defeat the US aggressors and overthrow the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak

clique, their henchmen. The Cambodian people have warmly welcomed the setting up of the leading organs of the National United Front of Cambodia and the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia, the only legal and authentic government of Cambodia.

The US war of aggression in Cambodia has greatly and deeply shocked the whole world, and the waves of protest against the Nixon administration have surged into a powerful movement against the US aggressors and in support of the people of the three Indochinese countries in their victorious fight.

In the United States, the indignation of progressive people runs high and has led to multiform protest actions by people of all strata, from students to senators. Most remarkable have been the demonstrations involving hundreds of thousands of people in many US cities.

For their part, the Vietnamese people will persist in their fight and step it up to foil the US "Vietnamization" plan which, in essence, is a plan for prolonging the war and continuing the occupation of South Viet Nam with a view to turning it into an American new type colony and military base and perpetuating the division of Viet Nam. The fight is continuing and has recorded new resounding military and political victories on all battlefronts. It is giving encouragement to many popular movements in the towns, including Saigon.

The "Vietnamization" plan is a product of the losing posture of the United States. It contains the seeds of defeat. In fact, it is already failing and will certainly end in complete and irretrievable failure.

Our people's long and hard fight is being waged while very favourable conditions prevail in our country, in Indochina and the rest of the world, at a time when our enemy is facing countless difficulties and contradictions, and has been thrown into passivity and dire confusion on the battlefields, right in the United States and throughout the world. Let our compatriots throughout the country keep firm their determination to fight and win. Let them persist in and step up their fight against US aggression, for national salvation, and be resolved to act upon President Ho's Testament: "No matter what difficulties and hardships lie ahead, our people are sure of total victory. The US imperialists will certainly have to quit. Our Fatherland will certainly be reunified. Our fellow-countrymen in the North and in the South will certainly be re-united under the same roof." At the same time, let our people whole-heartedly increase their militant solidarity with the people of our two neighbours — Cambodia and Laos — in order to completely defeat the US imperialist aggressors and their henchmen throughout the Indochinese peninsula. Our people's complete victory will be of international and historic significance, as President Ho pointed out: "We, a small nation, will have earned the signal honour of defeating through a heroic strug-

gle, two big imperialisms — the French and the American — and of making a worthy contribution to the world national-liberation movement."

Our people's extremely valiant fight is aimed at winning independence, freedom, and the right to be masters of their country, building a life of plenty and happiness for themselves and realizing their noblest ideal — socialism and communism. In the early twenties of this century, President Ho already pointed out the historical and social conditions of our country, especially the harsh oppression and exploitation by colonialism, in order to inculcate revolutionary thoughts in our people and prepare them for socialism, just as a well-tilled plot of land needs only good seeds to yield bumper crops.

As early as 1958, after the conclusion of the period of economic rehabilitation following the war of resistance against the French colonialists, President Ho said: "Socialist revolution is aimed at abolishing the regime of exploitation of man by man in our country and bringing a life of plenty to our entire people. This is the greatest and most glorious revolution in human history, but also the hardest, most complex and difficult one." In our country, to advance direct to socialism without going through the stage of capitalist development means to set up socialist relations of production, develop the economy and the productive forces, culture, science and technique, educate the working masses, the collective peasantry, and the socialist intelligentsia, and train a generation of young people both "red" and "expert". All this

must be done in the shortest period of time, with the most judicious, rational and effective revolutionary line and methods. In short, the following three revolutions must be carried out simultaneously: revolution in relations of production, technical revolution, and ideological and cultural revolution, the keystone being the technical revolution.

This is for us a new trail to blaze, new lands to open in all spheres. We should grasp and know how to apply the rules of development of socialism in the conditions of our country.

We should strengthen the Party's leadership and increase the managerial efficiency of the State so as to realize the people's right to be masters of their destiny and develop the revolutionary heroism of the masses at the basic units: co-operatives, factories, government offices, hence to successfully fulfil the State plan, the second program of the Party. That is what President Ho used to recommend. There lies the secret for building socialism successfully.

Just as the fight against US aggression, for national salvation, will surely win complete victory, socialist construction in our country will certainly achieve brilliant successes. Thus, our people will continue to contribute a worthy share to the revolutionary cause of the world's people, proving that in our times, with a correct revolutionary line, the oppressed peoples are able not only to defeat the US imperialist aggressors and achieve independence and freedom, but also directly proceed to build the best social system of mankind — socialism.

In his lifetime, President Ho disliked formalities and empty talks, and set great store by practical deeds. In the first page of his book "The Revolutionary Road" published in 1927, dealing with the conduct which should be that of the revolutionaries, he recommended: "Your deeds should match your words." To show our love, gratitude and loyalty to him, we must perform practical services for the country and the people, all our life and every moment of our life.

The boundless love felt for us by President Ho Chi Minh and our boundless love for him are our common sentiment towards our Fatherland — Viet Nam —, the socialist ideal, the revolutionary cause, and toward our comrades and fellow countrymen. As we celebrate President Ho's birthday, let everyone of us translate these most lofty ideas and sentiments into practical deeds.

Let our fighters and fellow-countrymen in the South keep firm their determination to defeat the US aggressors, continually and vigorously attack the enemy everywhere, step up their military and political struggle in the countryside, the mountain areas and the towns, record many more glorious exploits and smash the US imperialists' scheme for prolonging and expanding their war of aggression.

Let the people's armed forces in the North intensify training and study, raise their combativeness in all fields, heighten their vigilance, shatter all schemes and acts by the US imperialists of infringe-

ment upon the sovereignty and security of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, and actively participate in the development of our economy and culture.

Let manual and brain workers in all units and bases zealously push ahead the production movement, ensure the regular number of work-days and work-hours, increase labour efficiency, produce more material wealth, and successfully fulfil the State plan.

Let Party members and cadres at all levels in the State machinery strengthen their revolutionary fighting will, heighten their revolutionary virtues, improve their organizational and managerial abilities, respect and develop the people's collective masterhood, and strive to become worthy of their role as leader and very loyal servant of the people.

Let our entire Party carry out satisfactorily the campaign to raise the standard of Party members, the admission of the "Ho Chi Minh batch" of new Party members, raise the Party's combativeness, strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses, make the Party really pure and strong, and strengthen the Party's leadership over the whole revolutionary cause of our people.

Celebrating the 80th anniversary of the birth of President Ho Chi Minh, let everyone of us strive to be equal to the situation and to his tasks; let us all rise to the level of our times and wholeheartedly contribute our best to the revolutionary cause of the nation: to completely defeat the US aggressors, liberate the South, defend and build the socialist North,

advance toward the peaceful reunification of the country, and at the same time fulfil our internationalist duty to the revolutionary cause of the world's peoples, in conformity with President Ho Chi Minh's wishes.

President Ho said: "For many years, my heart has been with you, fellow-countrymen, and I believe that your hearts, too, are with me."

President Ho Chi Minh, who symbolizes the essence and spirit of our nation and the conscience of our time, will live for ever in the hearts of the Vietnamese people generation after generation. He will live for ever with our people's revolutionary cause, and the seeds he sowed will bring eternal spring to our country.

OUR PRESIDENT
HO CHI MINH

The life and work of President Ho Chi Minh is closely bound to the most glorious stage in the history of the Vietnamese revolution and the most intense period of struggle of the world revolution.

A genuine patriot who had evolved into a great Communist fighter, President Ho Chi Minh illuminated the path of the Vietnamese revolution with the light of Marxism-Leninism, and gave guidance to our entire Party and people, who, united as one man, have fought valiantly, written the most glorious pages in the history of our nation, and taken our country into an era of independence, freedom and socialism.

President Ho Chi Minh personifies the perfect combination of the ideal of independence and freedom with that of communism ; of fervent patriotism with proletarian internationalism. He inherited and developed the finest traditions of the Vietnamese nation and associated them with the most radically revolutionary ideology of our time, that of Marxism-Leninism. He founded and gave leadership to our Party and tempered it into a genuine revolutionary party of the working class ; he created the National

United Front, the people's armed forces, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and untiringly endeavoured to contribute to the strengthening of international solidarity. He devoted his care and attention to training and educating cadres and Party members and ceaselessly fostered future revolutionary generations.

Together with the Party's Central Committee, President Ho Chi Minh gave guidance to two revolutions in our country: the people's national democratic revolution and the socialist revolution; to two protracted wars of resistance against foreign aggressors: that against the French colonialists formerly and the present one against the American imperialists; to the building of socialism in the North, in active contribution to the struggle of the people of the world for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism.

President Ho Chi Minh is a shining example of a radically revolutionary spirit, dauntlessness and perseverance in struggle, total devotion to the Party, the people, and the revolution; inspired by a spirit of dedication and sacrifice, he worked all his life for the liberation of the working class, the nation and the whole of mankind, for independence, freedom, socialism and communism.

His noble virtues are loyalty to the Party, devotion to the people, industry, thrift, integrity, uprightness, total devotion to the public interest and complete selflessness, sincerity, modesty and simplicity.

He felt profound love for the labouring people, maintained close ties with the masses and had absolute confidence in the people's abilities and strength.

To gain a clear notion of his contribution to the revolutionary cause and to learn from his thought, virtues and style of work, let us go over his life and work.

I

THE YOUNG PATRIOT

(1890-1911)

As a child, President Ho Chi Minh went by the name of Nguyen Sinh Cung. Later he was given the school name of Nguyen Tat Thanh. For many years during his revolutionary life, he took the name of Nguyen Ai Quoc. He was born on May 19, 1890, in Hoang Tru village, his mother's native place, and grew up in his father's, Kim Lien village, Nam Dan district, Nghe An province.

He was born into a family of patriotic scholars of peasant stock. His father's name was Nguyen Sinh Huy, alias Nguyen Sinh Sac (1863-1929). Having lost both his parents when a child, Nguyen Sinh Huy had to work for a living while carrying on his studies. Thanks to his love of study and his intelligence, and also to the solicitous teaching of the scholar Hoang Duong, who gave him his daughter in marriage, he became a Pho Bang (doctor of literature — *Tr.*) and lived a simple life as a teacher. He instilled into his

children's minds the love of labour and urged them to study in order to understand "human ethics". After his graduation as a Pho Bang, repeatedly pressed by the authorities, he became an official but displayed a negative, non-cooperative attitude. He often said: "The officials are slaves among slaves, and therefore even more slavish." A patriot and a proud man, he refused to toady to the French colonialists, and so was soon dismissed from office. He then went to Nam Bo where he practised traditional medicine and lived a simple and pure life until his death.

President Ho Chi Minh's mother was Mrs Hoang Thi Loan (1868-1900), a gentle and hard-working woman who devoted her life to tilling the fields and educating her children.

He had an elder sister named Nguyen Thi Thanh, alias Bach Lien (1884-1954) and an elder brother named Nguyen Sinh Khiem, alias Nguyen Tat Dat (1888-1950). Both participated in the struggle against French colonialism and were sent to jail for various terms.

President Ho Chi Minh was the third child in the family. When a child, he was an intelligent and studious pupil, eager to learn new things. Besides school books, he loved to read patriotic novels and poems. Reading stories about heroes born in the region, and others, and listening to conversations between his father and his patriot friends infused him, even as a young boy, with love for his country and people. Living amidst the people, he witnessed

their daily miseries: beatings because of failure to pay rents and taxes, corvées. These spectacles made him suffer and kindled in his heart hatred of the aggressors and their agents, the traitors.

President Ho Chi Minh was born and grew up in a region with a long tradition of persevering struggle against a grudging nature and of valiant resistance to foreign aggression. Nghe Tinh was one of the first regions to raise the standard of revolt against the French colonialist aggressors at that time. Answering the call of the Van Than movement, patriotic scholars in Nghe An such as Tran Tan (Thanh Chuong), Dang Nhu Mai (Nam Dan) and others raised troops and staged insurrections. The Can Vuong movement¹ typified by the Huong Khe uprising under the leadership of Phan Dinh Phung and the Dong Du² movement of Phan Boi Chau, the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc³ movement and the insurrections and guerilla warfare by peasants under the leadership of Hoang Hoa Tham in Bac Bo, the drive for reforms led by Phan Chu Trinh, and the refusal by Trung Bo peasants to pay taxes—all had a profound influence on President Ho Chi Minh, especially when he was studying in Quoc Hoc College in Hue (1905-1910). And so, even as an adolescent, he harboured the will to drive out the French colonialists. When he was 15, he engaged in underground work and served as messenger for scholar patriots.

1. A monarchist patriotic movement (Tr.)

2. "Go East" (to Japan) movement (Tr.)

3. School for Patriotic Teaching (Tr.)

The above-mentioned patriotic movements took place in quick succession with great valour but they all failed for want of a correct line. Due to restrictions from historical conditions their leaders made no distinction between the French colonialists on the one hand and the French working class and labouring people on the other; they were not aware that the tasks of the Vietnamese revolution were to overthrow the French imperialists and win national independence, and to topple the feudal landlords and give land to the peasants; they were not conscious of the fact that the basic revolutionary forces among our people were the workers and the peasantry.

The *Can Vuong* movement failed because it could not rally the broad masses of the people, chiefly the peasants, and because the feudal landlord class had sunk into decay and, for the most part, had surrendered to the French while subjecting the people to ruthless oppression and exploitation.

The peasant insurrections led by Hoang Hoa Tham failed for want of clearly set forth lines and policies, and because of failure to organize broad popular masses, and absence of nation-wide support.

Phan Chu Trinh only demanded reforms and did not advocate the overthrow of the French colonialists and their feudal agents.

Phan Boi Chau—an anti-French colonialist activist—relied on the Japanese to topple the French,

something which was tantamount to "getting a tiger out by the front door while inviting a panther in by the back door."

President Ho Chi Minh had deep regard for Phan Dinh Phung, Hoang Hoa Tham, Phan Boi Chau, Phan Chu Trinh, but did not follow the courses charted by them. Refusing to "go east" to Japan, as advocated by the *Dong Du* movement, he turned to the Western countries, to which he was attracted by ideals of freedom, democracy and modern science and technology. Later, President Ho Chi Minh related, "At about the age of 13, for the first time I heard such French terms as 'liberty', 'equality' and 'fraternity'. So I developed a desire to acquaint myself with French civilization so as to find out what exactly was meant by these terms."

The path taken by President Ho Chi Minh was totally different from that taken by his predecessors, which, though it aimed at national independence, democracy and freedom, was the traditional path of the old Vietnamese patriots who remained closely bound to their Fatherland and its people. In search of a new path, he travelled extensively through all five continents, examining the situation, studying the newest revolutionary theories and experience of the time, and identifying himself with the working and toiling masses of every race and colour. He also became aware that the educational system of the French colonialists only aimed at training servile agents. And so, in early 1911, he left school and went

to Phan Thiet where he taught at a private school named Duc Thanh, founded by some patriotic scholars.

Soon later, he went south to Saigon. Nam Ky under the colonial regime differed in no way from Trung Ky and Bac Ky under the protectorate. Everywhere the people were subjected to the same oppression and exploitation, the same miseries and humiliations. This contributed all the more to President Ho Chi Minh's urge to go to the countries of the West to see how their peoples had managed to become independent and strong, so that at his return he could help his fellow-countrymen drive out the French colonialists. This decision of his opened up a new prospect to our people's struggle for national salvation.

II

FINDING OUT THE CORRECT REVOLUTIONARY PATH AND WORKING FOR THE FOUNDING OF THE PARTY OF THE VIETNAMESE WORKING CLASS

(1911-1930)

After a short stay in Saigon, in late 1911, President Ho Chi Minh, under the name of Ba, got a job as a kitchen help on board the S/S Admiral Latouche Tréville of the French company Chargeurs Réunis. From then on he travelled a great deal, especially to France. Inspired by profound patriotism and a deep hatred of the colonialists, he stoically endured all kinds of trials, bent on realizing his lofty dreams.

President Ho Chi Minh came to France in search of a revolutionary road to liberate his fellow-countrymen from the French colonialist yoke. He lived, studied and trained himself in the French workers' movement. He also visited many other countries in

Europe, Africa and the Americas. He did manual work for a living — as a galley hand in a steamer, a cook and a gardener in Le Havre, a snow-sweeper, a waiter, and a stoker in London, etc. Here, he joined the Overseas Labour Union, supported the patriotic struggle of the Irish people and made contact with a number of Vietnamese patriots in France. In the USA, he worked as a hired labourer in Brooklyn and attended meetings of black people in Harlem...

During those years spent among the people, he became deeply aware of the injustices and cruelties of capitalist society and was grievously shocked by the destitute life of the working class and labouring people of all countries, whatever the colour of their skin. During his visits to a number of colonial countries in Africa, he clearly saw that the loss of national independence entailed the same sufferings and humiliations. Everywhere the working class and labouring people were subjected to barbarous oppression and exploitation ; and the colonial peoples suffered under a same, irreconcilable enemy : the imperialists and the colonialists. Hence he clearly realized that our friends were the working class and the labouring people in all countries, and our enemy was imperialism wherever it may be.

“All martyrs of the working class, in Lausanne as well as in Paris, in Le Havre as well as in Martinique, were victims of one man-killer : international capitalism. The spirit of these exploited people always found the highest source of comfort in what-

ever confidence they could win in the cause of liberating their oppressed brothers, regardless of race or country." ¹

This was a great turning point in President Ho Chi Minh's thinking. Gradually, he educated our people and made them distinguish between friends and foes. Formerly, patriotic movements in Viet Nam had all more or less carried an anti-foreign character. But now our people began to realize that *the French working class and labouring people were their friends, while the French colonialists and imperialists were their true foes*. This was a problem of strategic significance not only for the Vietnamese revolution but also for the revolution in other colonial countries as well.

In 1917, returning to France from Britain, President Ho Chi Minh eagerly participated in the struggle of the French workers. He joined the French Socialist Party and founded the *Association of Vietnamese Patriots* to carry out propaganda among Vietnamese working in France and to enlighten them. Parallel to his political activities, he worked hard for a living, now as an employee in a photographer's shop, now doing painting for a dealer in "Chinese antiques." But he constantly maintained his optimism and stoically endured all kinds of hardships, never losing sight of the objective of his struggle. He learnt to write newspaper articles, and distri-

1. Nguyen Ai Quoc: "Le Procès de la colonisation française", *Œuvres choisies*, T. 1, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960. p. 59.

buted leaflets at meetings to denounce the crimes committed by the French colonialists in the colonies. He availed himself of all kinds of platforms from popular meetings to debates taking place in suburban clubs, to turn the attention of his audiences to the Indochina problem.

It was then, in the midst of such intense activity, that the outbreak of the Russian October Revolution shook the world. Like a thunderclap in spring, that Revolution awakened the working class, labouring people and oppressed nations in the world and roused them to revolutionary struggle. It opened up a new era in the history of mankind, the era of disintegration of capitalism and of victory of socialism on a world-wide scale. *The Russian October Revolution had a decisive influence on President Ho Chi Minh's militant life*. With enthusiasm and confidence in the bright future of revolution in our country and in the world, he was determined to follow the road of the Russian October Revolution.

The World War ended in 1918. The following year, the victorious imperialist countries held the Versailles Conference in France with a view to a redistribution of the world market. In the name of Vietnamese patriots in France, Nguyen Ai Quoc — was so named President Ho Chi Minh at that time — sent the Conference his famous eight-point petition entitled "*The Rights of the Nations*", in which he demanded that the French government recognize the Vietnamese people's right to freedom, democracy,

equality and self-determination. This was his first direct blow at the imperialist chieftains. But the Versailles Conference was merely a place where the victorious gangsters were dividing their booty among themselves, and the burden was to be borne by the peoples of the defeated countries and the oppressed nations. From this practical experience, President Ho Chi Minh drew another very important conclusion: the imperialists' declarations about freedom and democracy were but honeyed words aimed at deceiving the oppressed peoples. In order to gain genuine independence and freedom, the latter must first and foremost rely on their own strength; the Vietnamese must liberate themselves through their own efforts. This conclusion had a very important theoretical and practical significance, for it illuminated the path of revolutionary struggle of our people and other colonial peoples. The battle fought by President Ho Chi Minh at the Versailles Conference had great repercussions among the people of Viet Nam, France, and other French colonies. The French considered it a "bombshell" which shook French public opinion. The Vietnamese regarded it as a "signal shot" rousing our people to revolutionary struggle. Whenever they met, Vietnamese nationals in France would talk of independence and self-determination and mention the name of Nguyen Ai Quoc with immense respect and love. That confrontation opened up a new era in the history of the Vietnamese people's struggle against French imperialism, for national liberation.

Our people felt great pride and confidence in the leadership of Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc, a rising star in the Vietnamese sky.

The Russian October Revolution was followed by a powerful development of the international communist and workers' movement. In early 1919, Lenin and Marxists supporting his stand held a Congress in Moscow to found the Third International (i.e., the Communist International). The birth of the Communist International marked an immense victory of the international communist and workers' movement, for it had defeated the opportunistic, reformist and chauvinistic line of elements of the Second International. For this reason, it gave an impetus to the founding of many communist parties and the development of the revolutionary movement in the countries of the world. The Communist International proclaimed its resolute support for the national-liberation movement in the East. Lenin's *Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions* were passed by the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920. They charted the fundamental course for the revolutionary movement in the colonial and dependent countries.

The international working class now had a revolutionary citadel, the Soviet Union, and the correct leadership of the Communist International. The world revolutionary movement required leadership by genuine Marxist parties, the new-type parties of the working class. As in a number of other workers'

parties in Europe, a fierce struggle broke out within the French Socialist Party in defence of Marxism and against the revisionists. President Ho Chi Minh participated in the debates in the basic organizations of the French Socialist Party. It was at that moment that Lenin's *Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions* came to him. With the help of such French revolutionaries as Marcel Cachin, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, Monmousseau, President Ho Chi Minh realized all the more clearly that the Third International and Lenin's Theses answered his deepest aspirations: independence for his country and freedom for his people. He said: "Lenin's theses inspired me with such emotion, enthusiasm, enlightenment and confidence! I was moved to tears. Alone in my room, I said aloud as though I were addressing the masses: 'Oppressed fellow-countrymen! Here's what we need, here's our road to liberation!'" Then-
ceforward, he tried to find Lenin's works in order to study them, felt absolute confidence in Lenin, and unreservedly stood for the Third International. At the 18th Congress of the French Socialist Party held in Tours (from December 25 to 30, 1920), he denounced the heinous crimes of the French colonialists in Indochina and called on the French working class and authentic Marxists to work in a practical way to support the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese people and other colonial peoples. Together with the best among the French Marxists, he voted for the

founding of the Third International and became one of those who participated in the founding of the French Communist Party.

The following year (1921), President Ho Chi Minh was elected to the Presidium of the First National Congress of the French Communist Party held in Marseilles from December 25 to December 30. Before all the delegates, he thanked the Party Congress for its concern for the revolutionary struggle of the people in the colonies as shown by the fact that coloured party members were given positions of authority in this Congress. He asked the Congress to study and work out a policy towards the colonies in strict conformity to the ideas of communism. To this end, he proposed the setting up of a Party committee for the study of the problem of the colonies. This committee would draft a policy towards the colonies and submit a report to the next Congress (1922) for consideration and adoption. In 1922, the Study Committee on the issue of the colonies of the French section of the Communist International was established and President Ho Chi Minh was one of its members. At the 2nd Congress (October 1922) of the French CP., a resolution on the problem of the colonies was unanimously adopted. The resolution clearly stipulated that the French communists should give top priority to this problem and put it on the agenda of the Party's coming national convention. At the 23rd session of this congress, President Ho Chi Minh was also elected to its Presidium.

President Ho Chi Minh was one of the first members of the French Communist Party and also the first Vietnamese Communist. This is an immensely important fact in his militant life and in the history of the Vietnamese revolution. While the battle he fought at the Versailles Conference in 1919 was the "signal shot" rousing our people to struggle against French colonialism, his participation in the founding of the French Communist Party in 1920 marked a great historic turning point in the Vietnamese revolution. It was a decisive event, a leap forward, a qualitative change in his thought and political stand. It was then that he found the right revolutionary path for the Vietnamese people, a path in which class struggle was combined with national struggle, and genuine patriotism with proletarian internationalism. Far from being antagonistic, these two ideological streams blended together into a united whole and promoted each other's development.

President Ho Chi Minh's action which conformed to the march of progress — a switchover from nationalism to communism — moved a whole section of genuine Vietnamese patriots to follow Marxism-Leninism. Since then, Marxism-Leninism became accepted in the patriotic and working class movements in Viet Nam. Since then, the Vietnamese revolution developed a new orientation; it became an integral part of the world revolution.

In the light of the *Resolution of the Communist International* and Lenin's *Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions*, President Ho Chi Minh felt

the need for active organizational and propaganda work in order to impel forward the revolutionary movement in the colonial countries. In 1921, with the help of the French Communist Party, together with a number of patriots from French colonies, he founded the *Union internationale*. As a representative of the Indochinese people, he was elected to the Central Committee of the Union and appointed a standing member. The birth of this league was a very important political event for the oppressed peoples. It rallied the people of the colonial countries into a common front against imperialism. At the same time, it built up a militant solidarity between the people of the French colonies and the French working class and labouring people. To mobilize the colonial peoples to stand up for self-emancipation, the Union issued a *Manifesto*, which said: "Applying Karl Marx's formula, we tell you that your emancipation can only come from your own efforts."¹

To this end, the Union should put the problem before public opinion through articles in the press and the spoken word (holding talks, meetings, etc) and by using "every means available" (to carry on the revolutionary struggle).

In 1922, the *Union intercoloniale* published the newspaper *Le Paria* (The Outcast). President Ho Chi Minh was at the same time its publisher, editor and manager. Under his direct guidance, *Le Paria* exposed the policy of barbarous oppression and exploitation

1. Ho Chi Minh: *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1973, p. 21.

pursued by imperialism in general and French imperialism in particular, and roused the oppressed peoples to revolutionary struggle. It benefited from the sympathy and support of the French working class and toiling people. It blew a revolutionary wind through Indochina and many other colonies. In spite of all obstacles put up by the colonial authorities, copies of *Le Paria* were secretly brought into our country. Thanks to this, many Vietnamese patriots saw even more clearly the crimes of the French colonialists and began to get some understanding about the Russian October Revolution and about Lenin.

Apart from *Le Paria*, President Ho Chi Minh founded the Vietnamese language paper *Viet Nam Hon* which served as an organ of propaganda to arouse patriotism and the national consciousness among workers and labouring people in the home country and Vietnamese workers then living in France. At the same time he also contributed articles to *l'Humanité*, central organ of the French Communist Party, *La Vie ouvrière* (Workers' Life), central organ of the French General Confederation of Labour, and wrote the famous pamphlet *Le procès de la colonisation française* (French Colonization on Trial)¹. In a clear

1. *French Colonization on Trial* was written by President Ho Chi Minh in 1921 and published in France in 1925. Other press articles written by him in the 1921-1926 period were published by Su That Publishing House in two volumes: *In Condemnation of Colonialism* (1959) and *French Colonialist "Justice" in Indochina* (1962) (both in Vietnamese).

and simple style using irrefutable arguments and biting satire, this pamphlet was an indictment of colonialism in general and French colonialism in particular in all fields—economic, political, cultural and social. With concrete evidence, it exposed imperialism as the source of all oppression and exploitation, and revealed the ever more destitute life and the barbarous repression suffered by the workers and toiling people in the colonies. This work of President Ho was a crushing blow at imperialism and a first step pointing out the correct revolutionary path to our people and other oppressed peoples. It was not only a precious historical document in theory and ideology, but also had great literary qualities and easily penetrated the minds and hearts of its readers.

Sometime in the latter half of 1923, President Ho Chi Minh left France for the Soviet Union. As a representative of the colonial peasantry, he attended the Congress of the Peasants' International held from October 12 to 15, 1923, and was elected to its Executive Committee.

On January 21, 1924, Lenin's great heart ceased beating! With profound emotion, President Ho Chi Minh came to pay his last tribute to Lenin and wrote the article "*Lenin and the Colonial Peoples*", in which he said: "We are deeply grieved by this irretrievable loss and together with the people of all countries we share the sorrow of our brothers and sisters. However, we believe that the Communist

International and its sections, among them those in the colonial countries, will carry out the lessons and recommendations left by our leader.

“When he was living, Lenin was our father, teacher, comrade and mentor. Now he is the lodestar pointing out to us the way to the socialist revolution.”

President Ho Chi Minh stayed in the Soviet Union for some time. He worked for the Communist International and wrote many articles for the newspaper *Pravda* (Truth) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the review *International Correspondence* of the Communist International, in which he continued to expound his ideas about the national-liberation revolution in the colonies.

As an official delegate of the French Communist Party, he attended the Fifth Congress of the Communist International (June 17 to July 18, 1924) in Moscow and the subsequent congresses of international trade-unions, youth, women, etc.

At the Fifth Congress of the Communist International, he read an important report in which he fully expounded his stand and views and made a candid and friendly criticism of a number of Communist parties for not paying adequate attention to revolution in the colonies; he put forward active proposals for boosting the revolutionary movement in the colonial countries and laid especial emphasis on the emancipation of the peasantry in those countries.

President Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary ideas had been gradually shaping up since the Tours Congress

in 1920. His writings—concise and full of militancy—and especially his report and speeches at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International embodied the fundamental problems on the strategy and tactics of the revolution in Viet Nam and in the colonial countries in general.

Imbued with the ideas expressed in Lenin's *Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions*, President Ho Chi Minh not only had a clear view of the close relationship between the colonial revolution and the proletarian revolution in the “mother country” but also clearly saw the colonial revolution as an inseparable part of the world proletarian revolution. He said, “The colonial revolution is one of the wings of the proletarian revolution.” This point of view was embodied in this vivid and famous metaphor: “Capitalism is a leech with a sucker clinging to the proletariat in the ‘mother country’ and another to the proletariat in the colonies. If one wants to kill that leech, one must cut off both suckers. If only one sucker is severed, the other will continue to suck blood from the proletariat: the leech will continue to live and the cut sucker will grow again.”¹

Monopoly capitalism harshly exploits the working class in the “mother country” while cruelly exploiting the working class and the people of the colonies. In order to eradicate capitalism, the working class in the “mother country” must wage a revo-

1. Ho Chi Minh: *Selected Works* I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi-1960, p. 80.

lutionary struggle and strike at its very lair, while the working class and the people of the colonies must fight against imperialism, for national liberation. In this way, a close relationship will be established between the revolutionary forces of the working class in the imperialist countries and those of the oppressed peoples. Those two allied forces form a united front against imperialism, for the emancipation of the world working class and the oppressed nations. President Ho Chi Minh put in concrete form Lenin's theses on the national and the colonial questions. Through his contribution to theory and practical activity, he waged a resolute struggle to carry into effect Lenin's strategic watchword: "Proletarians in all countries and oppressed peoples, unite."

Praising the revolutionary positions of the Eastern countries, Lenin wrote in 1913: "But the opportunists had scarcely congratulated themselves on the inauguration of 'social peace' and on the fact that storms were needless under 'democracy' when a new source of great world storms opened up in Asia... It is in this era of storms and their 'repercussion' in Europe that we are now living"¹

Imbued with Lenin's teachings, President Ho Chi Minh said in 1924: "The destiny of the world proletariat depends for a great part on the colonies, which supply food and men to the big imperialist powers. If we want to defeat the latter, we must

1. Lenin, *The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx*, Moscow, 1955, pp. 20-21.

begin by depriving them of their colonies"¹. These words express the *revolutionary initiative* of the colonial peoples. The colonial revolution should be put on an equal footing with the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries and should not be considered dependent on the revolution in the mother countries. In the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, under the influence of the Russian October Revolution, the colonial peoples can win victory even before the working class in the "mother country", provided they know how to bring their revolutionary initiative into full play. The triumph of the August 1945 revolution in Viet Nam proved President Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary view-point to be wholly correct.

In defence of Lenin's theses on the national and colonial question, President Ho Chi Minh waged a resolute struggle against racial prejudices and chauvinistic ideas which still lingered on in the West European workers' movement, while upholding proletarian internationalism before the colonial peoples. He earnestly urged the Communist International and its sections to pay full attention to the national-liberation movement, to recruit members and train revolutionary cadres sprung from the colonial peoples by sending them to study at the University of the Orient in Moscow, by stepping up propaganda work in the colonial countries, etc. He said: "We

1. Nguyen Ai Quoc, *Speech at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International*, in *International Correspondence*, n° 41, 1923.

are disciples of Lenin and so must concentrate our strength and energies on the colonial question as well as on other problems so as to carry into practice his teachings." ¹

Not only did President Ho Chi Minh devote his attention to the revolutionary movement in our country, he also made active contribution to the international communist movement and the national-liberation movement. The political and ideological battle he was then waging took on a great significance and was aimed at defending Lenin's theses on the national and colonial question, and bringing an important contribution to strengthening the militant solidarity between the working class in the "mother countries" and the people of colonial and dependent countries.

As early as 1920, he realized that the national liberation revolution, in order to win victory, must follow the road of proletarian revolution; that national liberation is bound up with class liberation; that national independence is inseparable from socialism and communism. This is the road of complete and radical emancipation for the working class and people of the colonial countries. He said: "Only by liberating the working class can one liberate the nation; both these liberations can only be the work of communism and world revolution."

The national-liberation banner held high by President Ho Chi Minh is that of radical revolution by

1. Ho Chi Minh: *Selected Works I*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi-1960, p. 148.

the working class. Imbued with the viewpoint on un-interrupted revolution of Marxism-Leninism, he held that in a colonial country — agricultural and backward — after winning back national independence, the working class, closely allied to the peasantry, must and is fully able to advance direct to socialism, without passing through the stage of capitalist development.

In order to wage a national-liberation struggle, the colonial peoples must have a clear view of the *object* and the *forces* of the revolution. President Ho Chi Minh pointed out that the main enemy of the colonial peoples is *imperialism and its feudal agents*. They must concentrate forces to destroy this enemy. While condemning imperialism, President Ho did not forget to denounce its agents, the reactionary feudalists. When king Khai Dinh came to France to visit the Colonial Exposition (1922), he wrote the play *The Bamboo Dragon* and a series of articles castigating this puppet king.

In condemnation of imperialism in general, President Ho Chi Minh wrote: "The history of the conquest of Africa by the Europeans — like that of any colonial conquest — was written with the blood of the native peoples from beginning to end." And he launched this moving appeal: "Let the native peoples no longer endure those humiliations, let them rise up!"

In the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the national-liberation revolution, in order to

gain victory, must be led by the working class. President Ho Chi Minh had become aware at an early date of *the historic mission of the international working class*, the only class capable of giving leadership to the struggle for class liberation, national liberation, and the liberation of mankind from capitalist rule.

He also extolled the staunch and undaunted spirit of struggle of the working class in the colonial and dependent countries. From the struggle of the Dahomey working class in 1923, he arrived at this important assessment: "In the colonial countries, the working class begins to realize what class struggle is. Black and yellow-skinned workers should also be made to understand that their sole enemy is to be found precisely in the system which has led to enslavement, only it has grown more sophisticated, more ponderous and less humane than before."

In the colonial and dependent countries, the working class must seize hold of the national banner. Drawing from the experience of the Turkish working class movement, he said: "The Turkish proletariat, who have made a great contribution to the struggle for national independence, now see themselves forced to wage another struggle: class struggle". This was a common lesson for the working class of colonial and dependent countries.

In our country, the working class was then not yet very numerous and did not constitute as yet an independent political force; but pointing to the protest movement of 600 dyers in Cholon (Nam Bo) in

1922, President Ho Chi Minh said it was a sign of the times, a sign that the working class had begun to grow conscious of its strength and capabilities.

In order to fulfil the task of national liberation, President Ho Chi Minh stressed that the working class in the colonial countries must have its vanguard, i.e., must be led by a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party.

In 1921, he wrote: "The Indochinese people are filled with something which is boiling and roaring, and when the time comes, it will break out with great violence. Those who stand in the van must help the opportunity materialize. The barbarity of the colonial regime has prepared the ground; the only thing socialism has to do is to sow the seeds of liberation"¹.

In the colonial countries, the problem of liberating the nation, in essence the peasantry, overthrowing imperialism and winning national independence must go hand in hand with that of toppling the feudal landlords and giving land to the peasants. President Ho Chi Minh became aware at an early date of *the role and strength of the peasantry in the national-liberation revolution*. He followed with great attention the peasant movement in colonial and semi-colonial countries. He pointed out that in most French colonies, industry knew but little development and agriculture made up the major part of the economy;

1. Nguyen Ai Quoc, "Indochina", *The Communist Review*, n° 14, 1921.

hence the peasants accounted for 95 % of the population. The imperialists, the feudal landlords and men acting under the cloak of religion robbed them of their lands, cruelly oppressed and exploited them and turned them into serfs. He proposed that the Communist International should strengthen the leadership and organization of the peasantry in the colonial countries: "In all the French colonies, misery and hunger have grown worse and anger mounts. Rebellion by the native peasants is ripe. In many colonies, they have in fact rebelled on several occasions, but their uprisings have been drowned in blood. If at present the peasants have remained passive, it is because they lack organization and leadership. The Communist International should supply them with leading cadres and guide them towards revolution and liberation." He also proposed that the Communists in the semi-colonial countries should launch an urgent and powerful drive to educate the masses and make them clearly realize their strength, their interests and their ability to carry into effect the watchword: "*All lands to the peasants!*"

Formerly, the Vietnamese patriots, although relying on the strength of the peasantry to resist foreign aggression, had not had a truly clear view of the position and role of the peasants. President Ho Chi Minh was the first man in the history of the revolution in our country to have raised the peasant problem to a level commensurate with its true importance. It was a great problem in the strategy of the Vietnamese revolution.

Armed with the views of Marxism-Leninism on the role of the masses in history, *President Ho Chi Minh clearly realized and felt absolute confidence in the invincible revolutionary strength of the masses, who would overthrow the rule of the French colonialists and their feudal agents.* When speaking of the masses, he paid great attention to the forces of the youth and women. In 1924, he praised the valiant spirit displayed by 200 school students in a protest movement in a province of Nam Bo and considered it an encouraging sign¹. He deeply sympathized with the misery and humiliations of the women in the colonial countries and at the same time praised the example set by women in the East who had awakened.

To achieve national liberation, he decided to *return to the country, penetrate the masses, organize, train, unite and lead them to struggle for independence and freedom.*

In short, President Ho Chi Minh made it clear that the Vietnamese revolution was an integral part of the world proletarian revolution; it was to overthrow French imperialism and its feudal agents, liberate the nation and must then move towards the socialist revolution if the independence of the nation and the democratic freedoms of the people were to be ensured. To win victory, the Vietnamese revolution should be led by the working class on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance. It had a close tie

1. Letter from Ly Thuy (Nguyen Ai Quoc) to the Communist International on Indochina, dated December 19, 1924.

with the revolution in France, but we had to learn to use our own initiative, work on our own, and should not be dependent on the revolution in the metropolitan country.

Those are the fundamental problems on strategy and tactics and on the leadership of the Vietnamese revolution as put forward by President Ho Chi Minh. *They were very important political and ideological preparatory steps leading to the founding of a Communist party in our country.*

At an early date President Ho found the right revolutionary path for the Vietnamese people, which would lead the Vietnamese revolution in the same direction and in coordination with the world revolutionary movement. His revolutionary activity was bound up with the era of proletarian revolution opening with the great Russian October Revolution. The triumph of the Russian October Revolution and the founding of the Communist International helped him find the light of Marxism-Leninism at an early date. The international communist and workers' movement and the national-liberation movement supplied him with much experience in anti-imperialist struggle. He also drew experience from the history of our people's patriotic movements. While he engaged in intense activity abroad, especially after the First World War, at home the workers' movement and the patriotic movement also developed powerfully and eagerly received the light of Marxism-Leninism which he was the first to bring our people.

In his search for a revolutionary road for our people, he had engaged in independent thinking, and showed a gift for penetrating inquiry and research as well as quick reaction to events. But the important thing was that he had gone through a process of painstaking study, struggle and training in the international workers' movement. The road of his Marxist-Leninist enlightenment began with patriotism. Through the practice of revolutionary struggle, combining theoretical studies with practical work, he gradually drew important conclusions which he embodied in principles and used these to guide his activity. As he said: "Step by step during the course of the struggle, by studying Marxism-Leninism while engaging in practical activities, I gradually understood that only socialism and communism can liberate the oppressed nations and the working people throughout the world from slavery."

After staying in the Soviet Union for some time to study the Soviet regime and the experience in Party building according to Lenin's doctrine, President Ho Chi Minh went to Canton (China) in mid-December 1924. Here he went by the name of Ly Thuy. Entering into contact with Vietnamese revolutionaries, he made preparations in the political, ideological and organizational fields aimed at founding a new-type party of the Vietnamese working class.

1. Ho Chi Minh: Selected Writings, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi-1973, p. 252.

Meanwhile he worked publicly in the mission of Borodin, Soviet adviser to the Chinese Kuomintang government.

Only a few months before, the revolutionary Pham Hong Thai had thrown a bomb at Merlin, the Governor General of Indochina, who was passing through Shamen (Canton). Although the bomb failed to kill the old colonialist fox, it nevertheless heralded an era of national struggle, as a small swallow announces the coming of spring. Appraising Phan Boi Chau's patriotic organization and the *Tam Tam Xa*¹ then active in China, President Ho Chi Minh highly valued their patriotic spirit but clearly saw the weak points of their leaders, who "know little about politics, and even less about the organization of the masses."²

He made a selection of young patriots from those organizations and many others among those coming from the country, gave them political training to turn them into revolutionary cadres, and sent them back to the country to propagate Marxism-Leninism among our working class and people. He founded the *Viet Nam Thanh nien cach mang dong chi hoi* (*Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth Association*), a precursor organization of the Party, with a *Communist Group* as the leading core. He published the weekly *Thanh nien* (Youth), organ of its Leading Body.

1. *Tam Tam Xa* (Union of Hearts) was a Vietnamese revolutionary organization in Canton.

2. Nguyen Ai Quoc, *Report to the Presidium of the Communist International* of December 19, 1924.

He gave training to eight young adolescents, among them Ly Tu Trong, who was the first member of the Communist Youth Union and who fought to his last breath for the Party and for the people's revolutionary cause.

He also participated in the founding of the *Union of Oppressed Asian Peoples*, which included a Vietnamese section, for concerted action against the common enemy: imperialism.

The lectures he gave at the political training courses held in Canton were collected into a book entitled *Duong cach mang* (The Revolutionary Road) published by the Propaganda Department of the *Union of Oppressed Asian Peoples*.

From this book *Duong cach mang* emerged the strategy and tactics of the Vietnamese revolution. First of all, President Ho Chi Minh set forth the *spirit of radical revolution*. He pointed out: To live one must wage revolution. Even a small undertaking would never succeed without the necessary effort. And so "how could such an immense undertaking as freeing one's fellow-countrymen, freeing mankind, from the fetters of servitude succeed without trying one's utmost?"¹ Some people are discouraged by difficulties. They don't realize that "no matter how difficult an enterprise, it can always be achieved if one is resolved to do it. If it cannot be done because there are too few people, let many join their efforts. If it

1. Quotations in this passage are from President Ho Chi Minh's book *The Revolutionary Road*.

cannot be completed by the present generation, it can be finished by the next." To make revolution, one must have resolve, a spirit of sacrifice, perseverance, and unity. To this end everyone must first and foremost understand why revolution should be made, why it could not be otherwise, why everyone should join in the effort and this immediately, without delay.

President Ho Chi Minh combined the spirit of radical revolution of the working class with the finest traditions of the Vietnamese nation in order to define revolutionary morals. The first chapter in his book *Duong cach mang* (The Revolutionary Road) deals with "the qualities of a revolutionary": He must display industry and thrift, total dedication to the public interest and complete selflessness, be resolved to correct his defects, abstain from vainglory and arrogance, conform his deeds to his words, hold firm to his revolutionary beliefs, be ready to endure sacrifices, not be influenced by material interests, etc.

President Ho Chi Minh considered educating revolutionary cadres in revolutionary morality, one of the foremost requirements in the ideological and political preparations towards the founding of an authentically revolutionary party of the Vietnamese working class.

To make revolution successfully, a cadre should not only possess revolutionary virtues but also understand Marxist-Leninist theory and follow the right revolutionary line and methods. Speaking about the

significance and importance of revolutionary theory, in the first page of *The Revolutionary Road*, President Ho Chi Minh mentioned these immortal words of Lenin: "Without a revolutionary theory there can never be a revolutionary movement... Only a party guided by a vanguard theory can play its role as vanguard fighter."

Previously the Vietnamese people had staged many valiant uprisings against French imperialism, but these all failed for want of Marxist-Leninist theory, of the right revolutionary line and methods, for failure to understand the world situation, to assess enemy strength and ours, for lack of "stratagems", for failure to understand "tactics" and seize the opportune moment, for "going into action at the wrong time while failing to do so when circumstances are favourable." And so it is up to the revolutionaries to explain to the people Marxist-leninist theory, the situation and the experience of the world revolution.

On the *experience of the world revolution* President Ho Chi Minh drew lessons from the Russian October Revolution and drew on the experience of the French and American revolutions. He viewed the latter as bourgeois, not thorough revolutions. The Russian October Revolution alone was the most radical revolution, for it brought genuine freedom, equality, happiness to the toiling people and also helped the oppressed peoples make revolution to liberate themselves. The Russian October Revolution taught us that for the revolution to triumph one must

rely on the popular masses, essentially the workers and the peasants; that one should have a Marxist-Leninist party, firm and strong, united, ready to face sacrifices and showing the greatest resolve and stamina.

Imbued with Lenin's doctrine on the national and colonial question, creatively applying the experience of the Russian October Revolution to the concrete conditions of our country, President Ho Chi Minh charted this course for the Vietnamese revolution: a *new-type bourgeois democratic revolution* (now we call it a people's national democratic revolution) *advancing to socialist revolution without passing through the stage of capitalist development*. He said: Our enslaved people can no longer endure their condition; let them awaken, unite and be determined to die as free men rather than live as slaves; let them join their efforts, overthrow the regime of oppression and exploitation of the French colonialists and their feudal agents, liberate their nation and win independence and freedom.

Revolution is the common concern of the popular masses, not the private undertaking of a few people. Because the French imperialists' divisive policy drew a distinction between Vietnamese people of the North, the Centre and the South, because they used religion and culture to lure the people, laws to check them and force to repress them, in order to make revolution we must first of all awaken, organize, unite and give leadership to the various strata of the people.

But the revolutionaries must be fully aware that the workers and the peasants are the essential forces of the revolution, for they are the most heavily oppressed and exploited and are the most numerous. And so mass organizations should be organized: trade-unions, peasants' associations, women's and youth associations, etc.

With a view to organizing and uniting the revolutionary forces and working out the right revolutionary line and methods, one must first of all have a *revolutionary party*, which would mobilize and organize the people at home and establish ties with the other oppressed peoples and the proletariat in other countries. Only with a firm party can the revolution succeed, just as a ship can only sail over the ocean with a firm man at the helm. For the party to be firm, it must have Marxism-Leninism as its core. The Marxist-Leninist doctrine must be understood and followed by all party members. Without a doctrine, a party is like a man without brains, a ship without a compass. President Ho Chi Minh said: "Now there are many theories and doctrines, but the most authentic, the truest, the most revolutionary doctrine is Leninism."

President Ho Chi Minh also emphasized that *the Vietnamese revolution was a part of the world revolution*, that it followed the line of the Communist International, and maintained close ties with the French revolution and the national-liberation movement in the other colonial countries. *The Revolutionary Road* developed President Ho's revolutionary

ideas in previous periods and laid the foundation for the future programme of our Party. It had a great influence on the Vietnamese revolution.

From France, he propagated Marxism-Leninism back to Viet Nam through pamphlets and newspapers, chiefly *French Colonisation on Trial*, *Le Paria* and *Viet Nam Hon*. In Canton, he kept up the work by sending to Viet Nam further literature chiefly the pamphlet *Duong Cach Mang* (The Revolutionary Road) and the weekly *Thanh Nien* (Youth).

In April 1927, following the counter-revolutionary action of the Chiang Kai-shek clique in Canton, President Ho Chi Minh went to the Soviet Union, then attended the Conference against Imperialist War held in Brussels (Belgium); then he went to Switzerland, Italy and Siam (now Thailand). From the autumn of 1928, he was active in Siam, trained cadres and conducted propaganda, educational and organizational work among Vietnamese residents there, published the newspaper *Than ai* (Friendship) to propagate Marxism-Leninism among them, copies of which were also sent to Viet Nam.

Apart from these occupations, he managed to find time to learn the Thai language, translate books and especially do manual labour with Vietnamese residents in the Association for Cooperation, digging wells, gardening, transporting bricks for the building of schools, etc. The Vietnamese there used to call him *Thau Chin* with all their admiration and respect for him.

Relying on his own experience as a genuine patriot who had evolved into a communist militant, President Ho Chi Minh trained fervent young revolutionaries and through them disseminated Marxism-Leninism among our working class and toiling people. Abstaining from sending to the country verbatim reports of classical theory, he applied Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of our country in a creative manner, worked out a correct revolutionary line and popularized it through his book *The Revolutionary Road* and the journals *Youth* and *Friendship*. The clear and simple style of these publications helped their readers quickly understand and memorize their contents and act upon them. President Ho Chi Minh's way of going about his work resulted in a speedy awakening of the revolutionary spirit of the workers, peasants and various petty bourgeois strata. Their easy assimilation of Marxism-Leninism and active participation in revolutionary activity.

Starting from 1928, in implementation of the slogan of "proletarianization"¹ members of the *Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth League* went to work in factories, mines and plantations to conduct propaganda and organizational work among the workers. The workers' movement, at first spontaneous, localized and scattered, gradually became conscious and

¹ In the years 1928-29, the Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth League decided to dispatch a number of its members who were patriotic and revolutionary intellectuals of the petty bourgeoisie to factories, mines and plantations to conduct propaganda work and revolutionary activity among the working class. In this way they lived and worked among the workers and joined them in their struggle.

organized, was given leadership and displayed coordination between various branches and regions. From the end of 1929, it took on a distinctly independent character and became the nucleus of the national-liberation movement in our country. Armed with a vanguard revolutionary doctrine and the experience of the international workers' movement, suffering from the heaviest oppression and exploitation, inspired with a radically revolutionary spirit, and representing the most progressive mode of production, symbol of the fundamental and lasting interests of our whole nation, our working class proved itself to be the most deserving leaders of our people.

Marxism-Leninism was propagated by President Ho Chi Minh and his disciples to Viet Nam, whose population had a tradition of indomitable struggle against foreign aggression and whose working class, although not very numerous, was animated by a radically revolutionary spirit owing to its triple oppression and exploitation by the imperialists, the feudalists and the bourgeois; in Viet Nam the peasants' movement and the patriotic movements of the other popular strata had also gone deep. Once Marxism-Leninism, the most sharpened ideological weapon of our time, had conquered the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese revolutionaries, no barbarous enemy force could check it. On the political and ideological front, it drove back reformism and narrow nationalism and won supremacy in the Vietnamese revolutionary movement. Our workers' movement and our people's patriotic movement were demanding

the leadership of a party of the working class. Conditions were ripe for the founding of such a party. But as the problem was raised, there was no unity of views within the *Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth League*. A contest took place within this League and its leading body, between those who held that a Communist party should be set up in Indochina and those who argued that there was no need as yet for such a party. It was a struggle between the proletarian view and the petty-bourgeois view in the Revolutionary Youth League concerning the founding of a new-type party of the Vietnamese working class. This struggle led to the victory of the proletarian view and the founding of the *Indochinese Communist Party* in Bac Bo and the *Annamese Communist Party* in Nam Bo. In this situation, the *Tan Viet* could no longer maintain its old organization and so became the *Indochinese Communist Federation*. All three organizations claimed to be authentically communist and sought recognition by the Communist International. While conducting propaganda and mobilization work among the masses, they criticized each other and scrambled for influence.

In face of this situation, President Ho Chi Minh, given authority to represent the Communist International, went from Thailand to Hongkong in the autumn of 1929 and convened a Party-founding Congress on February 3, 1930, in Kowloon (near Hongkong, China). Under his chairmanship, the Congress decided to merge the three Communist organizations in Viet Nam into one single party named Viet Nam

Communist Party, and passed an *Outline Programme, Outline Strategy* and the *Rules of the Party*, drafted by President Ho Chi Minh.

Basing themselves on the nature of Vietnamese society, a semi-feudal colony, and on the content of *The Revolutionary Road, the Programme and Strategy of the Party* reaffirmed that the Vietnamese revolution was to be a new-type bourgeois democratic revolution (now called a people's national democratic revolution) advancing to a socialist revolution without passing through the stage of capitalist development. Its task was to overthrow the French imperialists and the feudal landlord class, win complete independence for Viet Nam, give land to the peasants, set up a worker-peasant-soldier government, bring democratic rights to the people and organize a worker-peasant army.

About the Party, the outline Programme and Strategy made it clear that our Party was the vanguard of the working class and that it was fully able to give leadership to the masses. It stood for solidarity with the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and for close ties with the international proletariat, especially the French working class.

The Party's outline Programme and Strategy answered the eager aspirations of our working class and people. That is why it succeeded in rallying the patriotic and democratic forces round the working class and assuming leadership of the Vietnamese revolution.

On the occasion of the founding of the Party, President Ho Chi Minh issued an Appeal which was a great source of encouragement for our entire Party and people:

"The Communist Party has been founded. It is the Party of the working class. It will help the proletariat lead the revolution waged for the sake of all oppressed and exploited people. From now on we must join the Party, help it and follow it."¹

The Party's founding conference had the same importance as a congress, for it worked out the strategy and tactics of the Vietnamese revolution and the fundamental principles on the building of the Party. Implementing its resolutions, within a short time the Communist organizations in Viet Nam merged, set up a provisional Central Committee and gave unified leadership to the movement in the whole country. Such results were due to the fact that the resolutions of the conference were a timely answer to the requirements of the revolutionary movement in our country; they were due to the judicious leadership of President Ho Chi Minh, and to the guidance and help of the Communist International.

President Ho Chi Minh had combined Marxism-Leninism with the workers' movement and the patriotic movement in Viet Nam to found our Party, the party of our working class.

1. Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1973, p. 41.

The birth of our Party was no accident but the necessary product of the history of the revolution in our country and the result of long and painstaking preparations by President Ho Chi Minh.

Our Party was and is the essential factor which decides all victories of the Vietnamese revolution. The founding of our Party marked a great turning point in the history of the Vietnamese revolution and opened up a new era, the era in which the Vietnamese revolution was placed under the leadership of the working class and its vanguard, the Marxist-Leninist Party.

III

FROM ABROAD, PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH LED THE REVOLUTION IN VIET NAM

(1930-1940)

Just after its founding, thanks to its correct line, our Party organized and led a revolutionary high tide without precedent in our country, the apex of which was the Nghe-Tinh Soviet movement.

To strengthen the leadership of the seething revolutionary movement in the whole country, in October 1930, the Party Central Committee held its first plenum to discuss and adopt the *Theses for the Democratic Bourgeois Revolution* (we now call it the people's national democratic revolution) drafted by Comrade Tran Phu, the first Secretary General of the Party, one of the outstanding disciples of President Ho Chi Minh. The Plenum also decided to change the Party's name to the *Indochinese Communist Party* and to set forth the immediate tasks of the Party.

In 1930 and mid-1931, although engaged in revolutionary activities in China, President Ho kept in close touch with the movement at home and, together with the Party's Central Committee, directed the execution of the Party line. First of all, he praised and encouraged the Nghe-Tinh Soviet movement. He said: "The people of Nghe-Tinh are reputed to be obstinate. Nghe-Tinh won for itself a fine name in the time of the French conquest and the national revolutionary movement (1905-1925). In the present struggle, the workers and peasants of Nghe-Tinh have upheld their revolutionary traditions... Nghe-Tinh fully deserves to be called 'red'." At the same time he sent an urgent request to the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern for a timely support to the Indochinese revolutionary movement. He exposed the policy of bloody repression by the imperialists and feudalists, while highlighting the spirit of valiant struggle of Party members and the masses: "White terror cannot weaken the revolutionary spirit of the fighters..."¹.

The ever fiercer revolutionary struggle of the worker and peasant masses called for an all-round and close leadership by the Party. Therefore, President Ho stressed that *the Party should be consolidated and developed*. Many Party members had been tempered in the revolutionary movement, but they had had no opportunity to study Marxist-Leninist theory and the Party's line and policies in a system-

1. Nguyen Ai Quoc : *Letter to the Far Eastern Bureau*, 1931.

atic way. To heighten the class character of the Party and raise the theoretical standard of Party members, on the one hand, he suggested that the Party's Central Committee should set up a committee in charge of propaganda and for the education of Party members, and for the production of a Party paper; that short-term courses should be held to give instruction on the Party's political programme and constitution, and to educate and train cadres. On the other hand, he reminded Party members that they should work in the workers' movement and pay attention to recruiting members among the proletariat. He stressed that our Party should clearly define its way of leading the masses. The Party propagates its line and policies through its cadres and should make use of persuasion, not orders. Party committees should regard themselves as advisers, educators, and propagandists and should not busy themselves with everything in a locality. Each committee should define concrete tasks for each cell, each member. Instructions sent to Party cells should be easy to understand so that the comrades could discuss, study and execute them. Party committees should also supervise the work of lower Party organizations. Speaking of a Party member's responsibility, he pointed out: "All Party members, all Party cells should discuss the instructions and resolutions of the Party's Central Committee. This should be done in order to raise the standard of Party members and ensure the carrying out of all instructions and resolutions and unity of mind and action among Party

members..." He also criticized such shortcomings as formalistic style of work, irrelevance to reality, to concrete and specific situations.

The 1930-1931 revolutionary main line was in essence one of workers and peasants, under our Party's leadership. To strengthen and consolidate the worker-peasant alliance, President Ho stressed the need to broaden *workers' unions* and *peasants' unions*.

President Ho pointed out that in our country, a *workers' union* is a revolutionary organization of the working masses, but when recruiting union members, one should not require such high qualifications as for Party membership, but should boldly admit large numbers of workers, especially younger ones, into the unions. The Party would educate them further so as to make revolutionary fighters out of them.

On the recruitment of union members, he urged that our Party should not only intensify propaganda work among workers in the mining and other major industries, but also pay attention to the unemployed and craftsmen in the cities and to the farm workers. Workers' unions should be organized vertically, from basic to central levels.

Assessing the workers' movement, President Ho pointed out that owing to the economic crisis, many workers had become unemployed or half-employed; they lived a miserable life, and so they continually rose up in fierce struggles. Those struggles helped awaken the working class, but the results were still limited, because the movement was not yet steady

and continuous, the unions were not strong enough, and Party members were not yet quite clear about the role of the unions.

The struggle of the working class was closely related to that of the peasantry and other labouring classes. President Ho stressed therefore that workers' unions should keep in touch with peasants' unions, that workers should support the peasants' struggles. The workers' unions should also join the *Anti-Imperialist League*¹ as a collective member. By doing so, they did not lose their independence, but could enhance their vanguard role in the struggle against imperialism.

In order to mobilize the peasantry in even more vigorous struggles, President Ho stressed that the Party should make them understand clearly its line of agrarian revolution in each stage of the revolution. The Party should lead the peasants in struggles for freedom, independence, reduction of taxes, abolition of the poll-tax, reduction of land rents, and against the sending of peasants as labourers to plantations and other colonial territories, against all phoney reforms and white terror, etc. Economic struggle should be combined with political struggle; peasants were advised to organize *self-defence units* to support their struggles. Through the peasants' movement, the Party would be in a position to consolidate and broaden the *peasants' unions*. Rich peasants should be resolutely excluded right from the start.

1. i.e. the anti-imperialist national united front.

Drawing lessons from the actions staged by Thai Binh peasants, President Ho pointed out these shortcomings: failure to organize reserve forces in neighbouring districts to reinforce the movement when necessary; failure to explain to the masses the objective of the struggle; letting police informers worm their way into the struggle and letting the masses know all the leaders; failure to draw lessons from the struggles of Nghe-An peasants, etc.

In agreement with the resolution of the Party's Central Committee on the organization of peasants' unions from basic to central levels, President Ho submitted to the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern a proposal for organizing a *Federation of Peasants' Unions in Indochina* with a view to giving unified leadership to the peasant movement in the whole country, for here landlords and rich peasants were not in control of the peasants' unions as in some other countries.

This proposal, however, could not be realized as yet because the situation at that time was difficult.

Together with the consolidation and broadening of workers' and peasants' unions, President Ho also pointed out that attention should be paid to the *Anti-Imperialist League*. Youth organizations should be unified and they should have independent activities. Workers' unions, peasants' unions, youth unions and women's unions should actively join the Anti-Imperialist League in the struggle against imperialism. On methods of propaganda and agitation among patriotic

elements in preparation for the founding of the Anti-Imperialist League, President Ho often advised Party members not to issue appeals to the workers in a general way, not to speak of the proletariat in a rigid manner. The immediate task that confronted us was to overthrow the French colonialists and liberate the nation, so we must arouse patriotic sentiments in the people at large.

President Ho also proposed to the Far Eastern Bureau that concerted action should be arranged between our Party and the Chinese Communist Party in border provinces of strategic importance — concerted action in propaganda work among workers and enemy troops. He constantly taught proletarian internationalism and principles of revolutionary work to cadres of our Party then working in China. He recommended that our cadres should carry on agitation among Vietnamese and French soldiers in Shanghai; in the case of soldiers, it was advisable first to arouse their longing for family and home, then to appeal to their love for country and nation.

During this time (1930-1931), as a member of the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern, in charge of the Southern Department, President Ho made important contributions to the creation of revolutionary movements in a number of Southeast Asian countries.

The 1930-1931 revolutionary upsurge and the Nghe-Tinh Soviet movement had repercussions in the world, and this was due to the spirit of heroic and undaunted struggle of our people, the correct leader-

ship of President Ho and the Party's Central Committee and the assistance of the Comintern. On the great historic significance of the 1930-1931 revolutionary high tide and the Nghe-Tinh Soviets, President Ho wrote later on: "The Nghe-Tinh Soviets testified to the valiant spirit and the revolutionary capacity of the Vietnamese labouring people. Though the movement met with failure, it forged the forces for the subsequent triumph of the August revolution."

Frightened by the 1930-1931 revolutionary high tide and the impact of President Ho's activities on Southeast Asian countries, the British imperialists illegally arrested President Ho (then taking the name of Tong Van So) in Hongkong, in June 1931. Kept in solitary confinement and miserable conditions, President Ho did not worry about his fate, for he knew that either he would be liquidated by the colonialists or would escape from their fetters and get back to revolutionary action. Day and night he felt anxious for the revolutionary movement in the country. But what worried him most was: Who would continue the work he had not finished? How to pass on some of his own experience to other comrades? Who would re-establish the contacts which he alone knew? Our Party was newly founded, but its prestige was already high, the struggle movement of the workers and peasants was surging up; meanwhile, the imperialists were trying hard to suppress the movement, many comrades were arrested, imprisoned or killed, many organizations were broken up; then, how to carry on the work?

Learning that President Ho was arrested, the *League against Imperialism, for National Independence* promptly issued a statement of protest to the British government and demanded his release. Thanks to his steadfastness, the assistance of the *International Red Relief* in providing a lawyer, and the whole-hearted help and defence by a barrister named Loseby who admired him, President Ho was set free in the spring of 1933.

During the time he was in custody, cadres and Party members inside and outside the country, in prison and out of prison, anxiously followed the news about their respected and beloved leader. Everyone was highly elated to hear of his release from prison.

After re-establishing contact with the Chinese Communist Party, President Ho went to the Soviet Union. He entered Lenin University, the higher Party school for leading cadres of Communist parties in the world. After finishing his studies, he worked at the Comintern's Institute of Research on National and Colonial Problems. While he was in the Soviet Union, he kept in close touch with the group of Vietnamese students there, looking after their education in revolutionary ethics, sense of unity, organization and discipline, proletarian internationalism and passing on to them his experience in revolutionary struggle.

In July 1935, a delegation of our Party led by Comrade Le Hong Phong came to attend the 7th Comintern Congress in Moscow. President Ho attended the Congress as an observer, going by the name of Lin. With a high sense of responsibility he did his

utmost to help the delegation of our Party fulfil its missions at the Congress.

Basing itself on the resolution of the 7th Congress of the Comintern and proceeding from the specific conditions of our country at that time, in the summer of 1936, the Party Central Committee held a plenum presided over by Comrade Le Hong Phong, then an alternate member of the Comintern Executive Committee. The Plenum decided on the creation of the *Indochinese Anti-Imperialist People's Front* (later changed to Indochinese Democratic Front) with a view to rallying all democratic and progressive forces in the struggle against the enemy, namely the French fascists and the French reactionary colonialists, for democratic freedoms, for improvement of the people's living conditions, in support of the French Popular Front, against aggressive fascism and for world peace.

In winter 1938, President Ho Chi Minh returned to China. He first stayed in Sian, then in Yen-an. Later on, he was back in Sian. Finally, he moved to Kwangsi to find the way home to continue his activity. During his stay in Kweilin (Kwangsi) he worked in a unit of the Chinese 8th Route Army while trying to get into contact with his comrades at home. He was elected Secretary of the Party Committee in the unit and at the same time was Club chairman. Concurrently, he monitored radio broadcasts to get international news reports for editing news education papers for the unit. In this period, he wrote a book about the *Special Zone* and a number of newspaper articles on

political and military events, the cruelty of Japanese fascism, the courage of the fighting men of the Chinese Red Army, the anti-Trotskyist struggle, etc. From February 12, 1939, most of these articles were published in the paper *Notre Voix* (Our Voice), our Party's weekly published legally in Hanoi. During this period, President Ho Chi Minh succeeded in establishing contact with our Party's Central Committee through the Bac Ky Party Committee. Basing his plans on the resolution of the 7th Congress of the Comintern and on the situation in our country he sent a letter to the Party CC, setting forth correct guidelines concerning the strategy and tactics to be followed in the period of the Indochinese Democratic Front (1936-1939). His ideas were summarized in a report to the Comintern which included the following items:

“For the time being¹ the Party should not put forward too exacting demands (national independence, parliament, etc.). To do so is to play into the Japanese fascists' hands.

It should only claim democratic rights, freedom of the press and freedom of speech, general amnesty for all political detainees, and freedom for the Party to engage in legal activity.

To reach this goal, the Party must strive to organize a broad Democratic National Front.

This Front should embrace not only Indochinese but also progressive French people residing in Indo-

1. During that time the Popular Front government was in office in France.

china, not only the toiling people but also the national bourgeoisie.

The Party must assume a tactful, flexible attitude towards the national bourgeoisie, strive to draw them into the Front and keep them there, urge them into action if possible, isolate them politically if necessary. At any rate, we must not leave them outside the Front, lest they should fall into the hands of the reaction and strengthen it.

With regard to the Trotskyites there can be no compromise, no concession. We must do everything possible to unmask them as agents of fascism and annihilate them politically.

To increase and consolidate its forces, to widen its influence and work effectively, the Indochinese Democratic Front must maintain close contact with the French Popular Front which also struggles for freedom and democracy and can give us great help.

The Party cannot demand that the Front recognize its leadership. It must instead show itself to be the Front's most loyal, active and sincere element. It is only through daily struggle and work, when the masses of the people have acknowledged the correct policies and leading capacity of the Party, that it can win the leading position.

In order to carry out this task the Party must uncompromisingly fight sectarianism and organize the systematic study of Marxism-Leninism in order to raise the cultural and political level of the Party members. It must help the non-Party cadres raise

their standard. It must maintain close contact with the French Communist Party." ¹

Besides, President Ho also reminded the Central Committee that it should control the Party press to avoid political deficiencies. The Party should be highly vigilant with regard to the Japanese imperialists' scheme of aggression against Indochina and the conciliatory attitude of the French colonial reactionaries towards the Japanese imperialists.

Thanks to the correct leadership of President Ho and the Party's Central Committee, the struggle movement of the masses for democratic liberties and improvement of living conditions attracted millions of people and awakened their political consciousness. The Party's prestige grew ever wider and deeper among our people.

Later, President Ho Chi Minh made the following assessment about the 1936-1939 democratic movement: " This movement has also given our Party and the present National Front invaluable experiences. It has taught us that whatever conforms to the people's aspirations will receive support from the masses who will wholeheartedly struggle for it and by this means a real mass movement is created. It has also taught us to avoid at all costs subjectivism and narrow-mindedness." ²

1. Ho Chi Minh : *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1973, pp. 42-43.

2. Ho Chi Minh : *Political Report to the 2nd Party Congress* (February 1951), published by the Party Central Committee, 1959.

IV

PREPARATION FOR GENERAL INSURRECTION

(1940-1945)

As early as 1924, President Ho had held the view that Indochina and the Pacific area would be a fiery furnace in a new world war. When our Party was founded, he gave an analysis of the contradictions of imperialism and foretold that a second world war would break out.

In September 1939, when the Second World War broke out, our Party had made a timely withdrawal into underground work and shifted its main activities to the rural areas. In November 1939, the Party's Central Committee held its sixth plenum presided over by Comrade Nguyen Van Cu, the then Secretary General, and decided on a change in strategy, concentrating forces on the task of national liberation and setting up the Indochinese Anti-Imperialist National United

Front. Meanwhile, President Ho (then bearing the name of Ho Quang) had returned to southern China to get in touch with the Party's Central Committee and make preparations for coming home. At the same time, he held that links with international organizations should be maintained, our revolutionary organizations abroad should be strengthened and preparations should be made to cope with the situation that would arise when "Chinese troops entered Viet Nam."

In June 1940, the German fascists attacked France, the French bourgeois government surrendered, the French colonialists in Indochina were utterly confounded. President Ho held that the time was becoming favourable for the Vietnamese revolution. Though he was then working in Kweilin (China), he contemplated setting up base areas in Cao Bang, where there existed a firm popular infrastructure, and from where the movement could spread to the delta region while maintaining links with the international communist movement. He gave instructions for a number of Party cadres then working in China to go home and gather forces, waiting for the opportunity to seize power.

As early as 1939, President Ho and the Party's Central Committee had foreseen that the Japanese imperialists would invade our country. This they did, in August 1940. The French colonialists fell on their knees and offered Indochina to the Japanese. Put under a double yoke, our people were determined to

rise up against the Japanese and French fascists. In November 1940, the Party's Central Committee held its seventh plenum, pointed out that the Japanese and French fascist imperialists were our two direct enemies and set the task of preparing for armed uprising to seize power. The plenum decided to maintain the Bac Son guerilla unit and build up a base area for the revolution.

In late December 1940, President Ho arrived at the Viet Nam-China border, opened a training course for cadres based on the document *The Road to Liberation*. On February 8, 1941, he arrived at Pac Bo (Cao Bang province), where under the name of Old Thu, he convened the 8th plenum of the Central Committee, trained cadres and directly conducted the pilot scheme of establishing national-salvation associations in Cao Bang. He also translated the *History of the Communist (B) Party of the Soviet Union*, and had the paper *Viet Nam Doc Lap* (shortened to *Viet Lap*) published. Though living and working in extremely arduous conditions, his manner remained easy and serene :

*Spending mornings beside the brook and evenings
in the cave,*

*Living on maize soup and bamboo shoots, always
on the alert,*

*I work as a wobbly stone desk translating the
Soviet Party History,*

Oh, what a life of luxury for a revolutionary !

Under the invincible banner of Marxism-Leninism, President Ho exalted the valour and self-reliance of an undaunted people with a thousands-of-years-old history of fighting and victory :

*Mountains and rivers as far as the eyes could see,
What need for more space can there be ?*

Here's Lenin stream, there Mount Marx,

With bare hands we are building a country.

In May 1941, representing the Comintern, President Ho presided over the 8th plenum of the Party's Central Committee. Giving a scientific analysis of the situation in the world and in the country, the plenum pointed out that if in the First World War, the Soviet Union, a socialist state, had come into being, then in this Second World War many other socialist countries would appear ; the revolution would triumph in many countries. The plenum affirmed that *national liberation was the most urgent task of the revolution in Indochina*. Therefore, for the time being, sectional and class interests should give way to the supreme interest of the nation ; first and foremost, it was necessary to win national independence and freedom for the people.

To rally broad sections of the people, win over all revolutionary forces that could be won over, spearhead the attack at the main enemies of the nation, the Japanese and the French fascists, the plenum decided to found the *Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh* (*Viet Nam Independence League*), or *Viet Minh* for short. To lay emphasis on national liberation, the

plenum pointed out that the aim of the mass organizations within the front was *national salvation*; therefore, their names were uniformly "association for national salvation". The plenum held that the mobilization of the masses in the revolutionary struggle should be done in the name of the Viet Minh Front. But the vanguard character of the Party should be upheld. As the Front broadened, the leading role of the Party should be consolidated and strengthened.

To bring about a further differentiation in the landlord class, the plenum decided that the slogan of confiscating land from landlords and distributing it to the peasants should remain temporarily shelved, and set forth such slogans as: confiscate land from the imperialists and the traitors and distribute it to poor peasants, reduce land rents and debt interests, redistribute communal lands, gradually give land to the tillers.

The plenum advocated the settlement of the national problem within the framework of individual countries in Indochina, replacing the slogan "Set up a democratic republican federal government of Indochina" by the slogan "Set up the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam".

The plenum also decided on the creation and development of military and para-military units, on strengthening their leadership and on the preparation for armed uprising, advancing from partial uprisings to a general uprising to seize power in the whole country.

Under the direct guidance of President Ho, the 8th plenum of the Central Committee was of especial historical importance. The resolution of the plenum dealt with the national-liberation problem in a thorough and complete way and marked a new step forward of the Vietnamese revolution. It was of decisive significance for the subsequent victory of the August Revolution.

On the proposal of President Ho, the conference elected a new Central Committee and appointed Comrade Truong Chinh Secretary General of the Party.

Following the Plenum, President Ho Chi Minh made personal recommendations to the comrades in the Standing Bureau of the Party CC before they left for the delta region to continue their activity: high sense of responsibility, unity and mutual confidence, collective leadership with individual resourcefulness, criticism and self-criticism.

Following the Plenum, President Ho issued an appeal to the whole people for unity in the fight to oust the Japanese and French fascists:

"At present, *the interests of national liberation are supreme*. We must unite to overthrow the imperialists and the traitors and save our nation from an unbearable situation.

"Revolutionary fighters, the time for liberation has come! Let's hold high the banner of independence, and lead the whole people in the fight to destroy

the common enemy. The sacred call of the Fatherland is resounding in your ears! The blood of national heroes is rushing in your veins! The nation is ready to fight and is awaiting your leadership!

“Let us all march forward! Let the entire people march forward! Let us all unite and drive out the French and the Japanese!”

In order to prepare for the armed uprising to seize power, from 1941 onward, President Ho gave instructions for the setting up of self-defence armed units in Cao Bang and wrote a number of important documents on guerilla tactics: *Guerilla Fighting, Experience of Chinese Guerilla*. Besides, he also translated *Sun Tzu's Military Art* and a book on training military commanders by Chuko Liang, to which he gave a new title: *How to Train Military Cadres*.

After the 8th plenum of the Central Committee, following President Ho's directives, the question of “marching south” was raised and speedily carried out. He entrusted a number of cadres with the task of opening two ways, one from Cao Bang to Lang Son, the other from Cao Bang to Bac Can and Thai Nguyen, so as to ensure communication with the Standing Bureau of the Central Committee and create favorable conditions for the development of political bases and armed forces for the revolution.

The resolution of the 8th plenum of the Central Committee and the clear-sighted line set forth by President Ho were earnestly put into effect by the whole Party.

In August 1942, taking the name of Ho Chi Minh, he went to China to get in touch with anti-Japanese forces of the Vietnamese living there. But as he crossed the frontier he was put under arrest by the local Chiang Kai-shek authorities and jailed for over a year. During that time, he wrote the collection of poems entitled *Prison Diary*. Sent back and forth through the 13 districts and 18 prisons of Kwangsi province, President Ho underwent hard trials, was given neither enough food nor clothes to change. Losing his teeth, his hair turning greyer, his body in poor condition, he lived “a life in which there is nothing human.” But hardships and dangers could not shake his iron will:

*Stubborn and persevering,
I've not yielded an inch,
Physically I'm suffering,
But my spirit will ne'er flinch¹.*

He expressed determination, optimism and confidence in the victory of the national-liberation cause:

*Death rather than servitude! Everywhere in my
country
The flags of insurrection again proudly flutter.
Oh, how sad at such a time to be a prisoner
To rush into battle I wish I could be free.²
Freed, the prisoner can build the country.
Misfortunes are tests of a man's loyalty.*

1-2. Ho Chi Minh: *Prison Diary*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1972, pp. 111, 91.

*To worry about the common good is a great merit
no doubt
Let the prison door open the real dragon will
fly out.*¹

Prison Diary is a collection of poems of "steely texture" which embody the noble thoughts and feelings of a great revolutionary fighter. It is of profound educative value for our entire Party and our entire people in revolutionary dignity and morality.

In September 1943, after being set free, President Ho came into contact with anti-Japanese and anti-French organizations of Vietnamese in Liuchow; meanwhile, he got in touch with the Party again so as to return home and continue leading the movement.

In late 1941 and early 1942, a guerilla war took place during eight months in Vu Nhai (Thai Nguyen province). In 1944, the revolutionary movement developed fairly strongly. In the base area of Bac Son, Vu Nhai and Cao Bang, the movement surged up and guerilla action was started. In July 1944, the Cao-Bac-Lang inter-provincial Party Committee held a meeting to assess the situation and held that conditions were ripe for starting a guerilla war in these three provinces. Afterward, the inter-provincial committee was to hold a last meeting to settle remaining problems and decide on the time for uprising when President Ho returned to Pac Bo (Cao Bang prov-

1. Ho Chi Minh: *Prison Diary*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1972, p. 88.

ince). After hearing reports on the situation and the resolution of the inter-provincial committee, President Ho decided to put off the uprising because that resolution was based only on the situation in the Cao-Bac-Lang provinces, not in the whole country, that is to say the Committee had seen only a part, not the whole of the situation. In the country, many regions were not ready for uprising; cadres and arms were scattered; a backbone force was utterly lacking. In those conditions, if guerilla warfare was started on too large a scale it would be doomed to failure, for the imperialists would concentrate their forces on suppressing it. President Ho held that the period of peaceful development of the revolution was now over, but the time for nation-wide uprising had not come yet. Therefore, if we limited our actions to the political sphere, they would not be enough to push the movement forward. But if we started the general uprising right away, it would be endangered by enemy action. It was time for the struggle to advance from political to military forms, but at present the former were still more important than the latter, so an appropriate form should be found if success was to be attained.

Thus President Ho had set forth the precept of combining both forms of struggle, political and military, to push the movement forward, paving the way for an insurrection to seize power. He stressed that if the armed forces were to be developed, one should rely mainly on the people, on the political

struggle of the masses. The more the revolutionary organizations of the masses were consolidated and developed, and the more vigorous their political struggle, the firmer the basis for organizing armed forces and waging armed struggle.

On the basis of the people's armed forces then taking shape, on December 22, 1944, President Ho gave instructions for creating the *Propaganda Brigade for the Liberation of Viet Nam* under the command of Comrade Vo Nguyen Giap. In these instructions, he pointed out:

"... The name of the Propaganda Brigade for Liberation means that the political side is more important than the military. It is a propaganda unit. In order to achieve effective military action, the chief principle is the concentration of forces; so, according to new instructions by the Organization, a main-force unit will be created by selecting the most determined and eager members and cadres from the guerrilla units in Cao-Bac-Lang and concentrating a large part of the weapons available.

"Ours being a national resistance by the whole people, we must mobilize and arm the whole people. While concentrating our forces to set up the brigade, we must maintain the local armed forces which must coordinate their operations and assist each other in all respects. For its part, the main-force brigade has the duty to guide the cadres of the local armed units,

assist them in training, and supply them with weapons if possible, thus helping these units develop unceasingly."¹

To conduct armed struggle according to the above precept and principle, he stressed the need for resolute and prompt action. After its creation, the Brigade should achieve good performances and the first action should definitely be a success. In its activities, it must pay attention to local armed units; it should send trained cadres to various places to exchange experience, co-ordinate actions and maintain communication with the leading body. On operational tactics, he advised the practice of guerilla: secret, active and prompt action; avoidance of conceit and under-estimation of the enemy; keeping the enemy unaware of one's whereabouts.

The above instructions by President Ho dealt with the main questions of the Party's military line in that period and even in the subsequent period of long-term resistance. It included questions of resistance by the whole people, mobilizing and arming the whole people; it gave directions for creating three kinds of troops²; it established the form of action combining military with political struggle by the armed forces, the principles of guerilla operations and tactics, etc.

1. Ho Chi Minh: *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1973, p. 47.

2. Guerillas, regionals and regulars (Tr.)

While paying attention to building up the military and political forces, he sent a letter to the entire nation affirming that the time for national liberation was drawing near and calling on all parties and organizations to make speedy preparations for the National Congress :

“ The aggressor camp is nearing the day of its destruction. The Allied countries are going to win final victory. The opportunity for our people to liberate themselves would come within one year or one and a half years. Time presses. We must act quickly !

“ I hope that the parties and organizations will earnestly make preparations and hold discussions so as to convene a *National Congress* this year. In this way, we shall certainly enjoy outside assistance and the cause of national salvation will certainly be victorious . ”

From the 8th plenum of the Central Committee and especially from September 1944 onward, President Ho and the Central Committee had held the view that the Japanese fascists and the French colonialists would try to get rid of each other in any case. Indeed, on March 9, 1945, the Japanese staged a coup and ousted the French colonialists, gaining undivided control of Indochina. From March 9 to 12, 1945, the Standing Bureau of the Party Central Committee held an enlarged meeting at Dinh Bang (Bac Ninh) to discuss the situation and issued a very important directive entitled “ *The Japanese-French Conflict and Our Action.* ” The meeting held that the Japanese

coup would bring about a deep political crisis which would hasten the maturation of conditions for a general uprising : it affirmed that the main and immediate enemy was the Japanese fascists and their agents , it set forth the task of the whole Party to start a broad movement of struggle against the Japanese, for national salvation, as a prelude to the general uprising.

In May 1945, President Ho went from Cao Bang to Tan Trao (Son Duong, Tuyen Quang) in order to assume direct guidance of the revolutionary movement in the whole country. After hearing detailed reports on the situation, he was in agreement with the directive of the Central Committee Standing Bureau and the resolution of the Revolutionary Military Conference of Bac-Ky (April 1945). At the same time he added a number of important points, for instance, the establishment of the *Viet Bac Liberated Area* and the merging of the armed forces into the *Liberation Army* (June 4, 1945). Immediately after that, he laid down the ten policies for the *Liberated Area* : drive out the Japanese fascists and the traitor clique ; confiscate the properties of the invaders and traitors and distribute them to the poor ; proclaim universal suffrage and democratic freedoms ; arm the masses and urge them to support the guerillas and join the Liberation Army ; organize land reclamation, encourage production, achieve a self-supporting economy in the liberated area ; implement social insurance and give relief to victims ; redistribute communal lands, reduce land rents and debt

interests, and order a moratorium of debts; abolish taxes and corvées; fight illiteracy and give military and political training to the people; ensure equality among various nationalities, and between men and women.

The creation of the liberated area was a great success of our people. It was the revolutionary base area for the whole country, the miniature image of the new Viet Nam to come. It inspired and impelled vigorously the anti-Japanese movement for national salvation.

The world war was drawing to a conclusion. The German and Italian fascists had surrendered to the Soviet Union and the Allies; the Japanese fascists were also nearing their doom. In Indochina, Japanese troops were in utter confusion. More than ever the revolutionary movement was seething in the whole country. Conditions for a general uprising were ripe. Seizing this unique opportunity, President Ho, together with the Party Central Committee, resolved to mobilize the whole people in a general uprising to seize power in the whole country. He stressed: "This time both internal and external conditions are very favourable. Therefore, our Party must absolutely lead the people to fight for independence, regardless of sacrifice. Even if in our fight we had to set afire the whole of the Truong Son range, we should be determined to win independence."

On a proposal by President Ho, the Party National Conference and the National Congress, which had

been under preparation, were successively held at Tan Trao (Son Duong, Tuyen Quang) at a time when the heroic Soviet army had just wiped out the main-force armies of the Japanese fascists in Northeast China.

The Party National Conference, held on August 15, 1945, decided to launch a general uprising, set the objectives of the struggle as "opposing aggression", "complete independence", "people's power", and put forward three principles for conducting the uprising: concentration, united action and good timing; attacks should be made wherever victory was certain, either in city or countryside; political struggle should be combined with military struggle so as to undermine enemy morale before the attacks. With respect to internal affairs, the Conference specified that attention should be paid to propaganda and organization among the masses; it passed the ten great policies of the Viet Minh, regarding them as the immediate basic policies of our entire Party and people. In foreign affairs, we should turn to account the contradictions between the Anglo-French and the US-Chiang groups, and avoid having to face several enemies at a time; we should realize clearly that the antagonism between the British, Americans and French on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other might incite the Anglo-Americans to compromise with the French and let them return to Indochina. The Conference stressed that the Party should be united politically and organizationally, that

both rightist and "leftist" deviations should be opposed so as to lead the whole people to rise up and seize power.

The resolution of the Conference gave our Party and people precepts and policies for the coming general insurrection; at the same time, it supplied them with guidance after revolutionary power had been gained in the whole country.

Following the Party National Conference, the National Congress was held on August 16, 1945 under the chairmanship of President Ho. It was the first time that representatives of political parties, people's organizations, nationalities, religious bodies, coming from the North, the Centre and the South, and a number of representatives of Vietnamese nationals residing abroad were able to meet President Ho, the respected and beloved leader of our entire people. The National Congress warmly approved the decision on general insurrection taken by our Party and the Viet Minh Leading Body. The Congress expressed determination to win back independence before Allied troops came to Indochina: "Our country won't be automatically independent when the Japanese are defeated. Many difficulties and obstacles will crop up. We must be wise and resolute. We must be wise to avoid things that may prove disadvantageous to us. We must be resolute to win complete independence. In the world, after this war, a people who are resolute and unanimous in demanding independence are sure to be independent. We shall be victorious."

The Congress earnestly called on the people in the whole country and on the revolutionary organizations to rise up in time, to be united and to strive for the implementation of the ten policies of the Viet Minh. To provide leadership for the national liberation revolution till victory, the Congress appointed the *Viet Nam National Committee for Liberation*, that is the *Provisional Government* of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, with Comrade Ho Chi Minh as President.

The Congress also defined the national flag and national anthem of Viet Nam.

The whole country resounded with President Ho's appeal for general uprising:

"Dear fellow-countrymen,

At present, the Japanese army has collapsed. The national salvation movement has spread to the whole country...

The decisive hour has struck for the destiny of our people. Let all of us stand up and rely on our own strength to free ourselves.

Many oppressed peoples the world over are vying with each other in wresting back independence. We should not lag behind.

Forward! Forward! Under the banner of the Viet Minh, let us valiantly march forward!"¹

1. Ho Chi Minh: "Appeal for General Insurrection," *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1973, p. 49.

Following his appeal, our whole people from North to South, from the lowlands to the highlands, millions as one man, rose up in a general insurrection to seize power in the whole country.

The August Revolution broke out at an opportune moment, as President Ho and the Party Central Committee had foreseen at the outbreak of the Second World War, the occurrence of which opportune moment vanguard people should seek to hasten, as President Ho had pointed out when he found the revolutionary path for our people.

On August 25, 1945, from Tan Trao (Tuyen Quang) President Ho Chi Minh arrived back in Hanoi to join the Party CC in direct leadership of the revolution.

He presided over the meetings of the CC Standing Bureau held in Hanoi and made decisions on important issues concerning domestic and foreign affairs in the new situation. First and foremost, a *Declaration of Independence* must be issued, the list of names of the Provisional Government announced, and a ceremony held for its inauguration. All this should be done before the Chiang Kai-shek troops entered Indochina ostensibly to disarm the Japanese.

On August 28, the list of names of the Provisional Government was published in Hanoi newspapers. On the proposal of President Ho Chi Minh, its composition was enlarged. This put into effect the policy of President Ho Chi Minh and the Party CC of broadly uniting the various strata of the people in the

struggle for the defence and building of the country. On the eve of the inaugural ceremony, President Ho Chi Minh had a cordial meeting with the ministers of the Provisional Government at Bac Bo Palace.

On September 2, 1945, at Ba Dinh Square (Hanoi), on behalf of the Provisional Government, President Ho Chi Minh solemnly read the historic *Declaration of Independence*, proclaiming the birth of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the complete abolition of the colonial and feudal administration, and asserting the freedom and independence of the Vietnamese nation before our people and the world's peoples:

“ A people that has courageously opposed French domination for more than eighty years, a people that has fought side by side with the Allies against the fascists during these last years, such a people must be free and independent.

“ Viet Nam has the right to be free and independent and, in fact, it is so already. All the people of Viet Nam are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength and to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their freedom and independence.”

The *Declaration of Independence* was the essence of previous works by President Ho, of Party documents and of manifestoes by national heroes and revolutionaries of previous generations. The *Declaration of Independence* was a most glorious page in the history of the persevering and undaunted struggle of the Vietnamese people.

The success of historic and epoch making significance of the August revolution ushered in a new era in the history of the Vietnamese people, for it gave birth to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the first people's democratic State in Southeast Asia. The August Revolution was not only the outcome of the movement for national liberation in the years 1939-1945, but also the result of the long and heroic struggle of our people under the leadership of the Party and President Ho.

The success of the August Revolution in Viet Nam testified to the complete correctness of President Ho's line for national salvation. By leading the August Revolution to victory, he made a contribution to the world revolution. He led our people in breaking the colonial system of imperialism at its weakest link, thus helping to start the process of disintegration of the colonial system in the new conditions existing after the end of the second world war.

The success of the August Revolution proved that President Ho had creatively applied Lenin's theory on the national and colonial problems to the specific conditions of Viet Nam: in the era of proletarian revolution, the national-liberation revolution, the decisive first step of the people's national democratic revolution, led by the working class, is fully capable of winning victory in a colonial and semi-feudal country; this revolution is closely linked with the proletarian revolution in the "metropolitan country", but does not depend on the revolution there; on

the contrary, it can hold the initiative and achieve success before the working class comes to power in the "parent State". As President Ho said, "It was a great victory of the Vietnamese people, and also the first victory of Marxism-Leninism in a colonial country".¹

"For the first time in the revolutionary history of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, a Party barely fifteen years old has led the revolution to success and seized power throughout the country."²

1. Ho Chi Minh: *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1973, p. 235.

2. Ho Chi Minh: Political Report at the 2nd Party Congress", *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1973, p. 109.

V

THE FIRST RESISTANCE

(1945-1954)

After winning power, with no time to organize and consolidate our forces, our people had to face an extremely difficult and complicated situation. The terrible famine caused by the French colonialists and Japanese fascists was still a threat. The country's economy and finances were exhausted. Meanwhile, in the North, 200,000 troops of Chiang Kai-shek, on American orders, poured into Viet Nam under the pretext of disarming the Japanese, but in fact with the aim of attempting to destroy our Party, shatter the Viet Minh, help the reactionary government under US-Chiang control. Counter-revolutionary elements such as men of the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang, Phuc Quoc, Viet Nam Cach Mang Dong Minh Hoi, etc... demanded a change in the composition of the government, a new national flag and President Ho Chi Minh's resignation, etc... In the South, taking cover behind

British troops, the French colonialists staged a comeback. Vietnamese reactionaries reared their heads and prepared to collaborate with the French colonialists to oppose our people's resistance in the South. While the fate of our new State was hung by a thread, President Ho assumed his heavy responsibility before the people: "My duty is like that of a helmsman who must steer the boat of the Fatherland safely through the storms and take the people to the shore of happiness."

He called on the people to *strengthen unity and fight against famine, illiteracy and foreign aggression* and set forth the slogan: "*Resistance and national construction should go together.*"

The main task now being to maintain revolutionary power, President Ho proposed to *hold general elections as soon as possible, elect a government and promulgate a democratic Constitution*, so as to inspire the people with confidence in the new regime. Before the world, an administration elected by the people would have undeniable legal standing. On January 6, 1946, general elections were successfully held in the whole country. Our whole people expressed their especial confidence in President Ho. On March 2, 1946, at the first session of the National Assembly, he was elected President of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. On November 9, 1946, the National Assembly adopted the first *Constitution* of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, affirming our people's right to be masters of their own country and proclaiming democratic liberties.

To satisfy urgently the practical interests of the people, primarily the workers and peasants, President Ho proposed that the Government should abolish the tax system instituted by the French colonialists, promulgate labour legislation, safeguard the workers' interests, order a 25 per cent reduction of land rents, distribute the land confiscated from the French colonialists and Vietnamese traitors and redistribute communal land to land-hungry peasants. He launched a campaign for *increasing production* as an emergency measure to fight famine. He also called on citizens to share food and clothing with the needy, and set an example for everyone to follow: "When we take a bowl of rice," he said, "we can't help being moved thinking of the poor and hungry. So I suggest to my fellow-citizens in the whole country — and I am putting this into practice myself — that we should go without a meal once every ten days, i.e., three meals every month. The rice saved this way will be given to the poor." On the occasion of the *Gold Week*, he called on all sections of the people to make sacrifices and help the Government get financial resources for national defence.

President Ho paid great attention to the raising of the people's cultural standard. He launched the movement for *doing away with illiteracy*; he advised the people to adopt a *new way of life*, educated our cadres and people and urged them to display industry, thrift, integrity and uprightness, and to get rid of

backward ideas and customs left over by the colonial and feudal system, thus making themselves worthy of an independent Viet Nam. He took care of the "young shoots" of the nation. In his letters to school-children on the occasion of the new school-year and to all children on the occasion of the mid-Autumn festival, he advised them to study well so as to take part in building up the country in the future.

On the initiative of President Ho, in May 1946, the *Viet Nam National Union* (Lien Viet) was founded to broaden national unity in co-operation with the political parties and democratic personalities that had recently joined the national united front. The patriotic tradition of our people was vigorously enhanced, our entire people expressed their solidarity and unity of mind round the Government headed by President Ho. This made up an invincible force for fighting against external and internal enemies.

Facing many foes at the same time, during the period following the August Revolution, President Ho and the Party Central Committee realized that the most dangerous enemy then was the French colonialist aggressors. He applied very wise and flexible tactics; while holding firm to the principle of national sovereignty and independence, he made a temporary compromise with the Chiang troops so as to maintain power and have a free hand to deal with French troops in the South. On the one hand, we conceded to the Chiang troops some political and economic advantages; on the other hand, we made use of the

strength of the national united front to frustrate all their dark schemes and punish their agents, the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang, who had unmasked themselves as counter-revolutionaries. In the meantime, President Ho and the Party Central Committee stepped up the building up of armed forces and mobilized the people in the whole country to support the resistance of our Southern compatriots. In late February 1946, on American orders, the Chiang troops agreed to let French troops come to North Viet Nam to replace them. To avoid engaging several enemies in the whole country without proper preparations, President Ho shifted to a policy of temporary compromise with the French by signing the Preliminary Agreement of March 6, 1946. Thanks to this, we were able to oust the Chiang troops from the North and wipe out their agents, at the same time frustrating the US imperialists' schemes. The conclusion of the preliminary agreement also enabled us to gain extremely precious time for building up and consolidating our forces and making all-sided preparations for nation-wide resistance against the French colonialists. Our Southern compatriots cleverly took this opportunity to build up and develop their own forces.

On May 31, 1946, President Ho started off on a visit to France as a distinguished guest of the French government. During his stay there, President Ho made contacts with various sections of the French people and Vietnamese nationals. He endeavoured to make everyone understand clearly the just struggle of our people, thereby winning the sympathy and

support of the French people and enhancing the prestige of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in the international arena. He expressed our people's goodwill for peace on the principle of safeguarding national sovereignty : " Nam Bo is part of Viet Nam ; no one has the right to sever it, no force can sever it from our country." Owing to the obdurate and bellicose attitude of the French colonialists, the official talks between our Government's delegation led by Comrade Pham Van Dong and the French government's delegation at Fontainebleau were unsuccessful. President Ho signed a Modus Vivendi with the French Government on September 14, 1946, so as to gain time for building up our forces and making preparations for the nation-wide resistance, which he knew was bound to happen.

Facing extremely grave dangers, President Ho stood at the head of our Party as a calm, clear-sighted, wise, courageous and experienced helmsman, who led the boat of the Vietnamese revolution safely through all shoals and reefs. Reality proved that the political line of President Ho and the Party Central Committee was truly clear-sighted: Rely on the strength of national unity, hold firm to the strategic direction, show both firmness in principle and flexibility in tactics, cleverly turn to account the contradictions within the ranks of the enemy so as to divide them, thoroughly isolate the most dangerous foes, create conditions for maintaining and consolidating revolutionary power, muster forces for the long war of resistance against the French colonialist aggressors.

Due to blatant acts of aggression by the French colonialists, the war spread to the whole country on December 19, 1946. On December 20, 1946, President Ho issued the *Appeal for National Resistance*: "We want peace, we have made concessions. But the more concessions we make, the farther the French colonialists encroach upon us, for they are bent on conquering our country once again. No! We would rather sacrifice everything than lose our independence and be enslaved.

"Compatriots, stand up!

"Men and women, old and young, regardless of religious creed, political affiliation and nationalities, all Vietnamese must stand up to fight the French colonialists and save the Fatherland. Those who have rifles will use their rifles; those who have swords will use their swords; those who have no swords will use spades, hoes or sticks. Everyone must endeavour to oppose the colonialists and save his country!"¹

This stirring call by President Ho laid bare the aggressive design of the French colonialists, expressed our people's will to fight to a finish and pointed out the basic features of the policy of protracted resistance and the line of people's war charted by our Party. He affirmed that the war of resistance would

1. Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1973, p. 68.

be long and arduous, but certainly victorious. To lead the resistance to victory, we should rely on the people and wage a resistance by the whole people and in all respects.

President Ho's thought on people's war was clearly embodied in the directive on *Resistance by the Entire People* issued by the Central Committee on December 22, 1946. Explaining the Party's line and policy of resistance, in early 1947 Comrade Truong Chinh, Secretary General of the Party, wrote the book *The Resistance Will Win*. The line of protracted, popular, all-sided and self-reliant resistance, and the three stages of the resistance: defensive, active see-saw struggle, and general offensive, were widely explained to the cadres, soldiers and people and helped strengthen their determination and confidence in final victory.

After the Viet Bac victory (1947), with a view to mobilizing all forces for the resistance, in June 1948 President Ho issued the *Appeal for Patriotic Emulation*: emulation in wiping out famine, illiteracy and foreign invaders; emulation in waging a resistance by the whole people, an all-sided resistance; emulation in fighting the enemy at the front, emulation in production and thrift in the rear, and in carrying out the slogan "All for the front, all for victory." He encouraged all sections of the people to take part in the emulation movement:

*Let everyone and every branch
Emulate one another
Every day.
We are sure to win
The enemy is sure to lose.*

The working class played a vanguard role in the patriotic emulation movement. The peasantry, standing on its own frontline, was eager to carry on production and practise thrift so as to provide the front with more manpower and material resources. President Ho shared the hard life of our cadres, soldiers and people. He visited and encouraged old folk, women, young people, children, minority people, intellectuals, writers and artists, etc. to emulate each other and devote their talents and energies to the cause of resistance and national construction.

The patriotic emulation movement proceeded with continuity and enthusiasm. It became a motive force giving more impetus to the people's resistance. Through this movement, President Ho also educated and fostered men of a new type, represented by heroes, emulation fighters and model cadres. They were beautiful flowers of revolutionary heroism carefully cultivated by President Ho.

President Ho paid constant attention to the *consolidation and development of the Party*. He compared the Party to a power generator and the affairs of the resistance and national construction to electric lights; the more powerful the generator, the brighter the lights. To strengthen its leading role, President

Ho pointed out, the Party should be strong, pure and exemplary, all members should be united in ideology, organization and action. Cadres and Party members should resolutely and correctly carry out all Party and Government policies; they should maintain close relations with the masses, and implement the mass line; they should practise self-criticism and criticism. To achieve the revolutionary goal, organization is not enough; cadres and Party members should be united and show sincere affection to each other, wholeheartedly serve the Party and the people, display revolutionary enthusiasm and good moral qualities. In March 1947, he wrote a *Letter to the Comrades in Bac Bo* then a *Letter to the Comrades in Trung Bo* calling on cadres and Party members to devote all their moral and material strength to leading our people toward this one goal: driving out the French colonialists, bringing back independence and unity to our country. He criticized such shortcomings of cadres and Party members as: parochialism, sectarianism, militarism, bureaucracy, narrow-mindedness, formalism, red tape, discipline, selfishness and depravity. In October 1947, he wrote the book *Let's Improve Our Style of Work* as a document for cadres and Party members to educate themselves in ideology, morality and working style. He set forth 12 points for building up the Party and 5 points in revolutionary morality: humanity, loyalty, will, courage and honesty. "Rivers get water from their sources, and would run dry if cut from them. Trees must have roots, and would wither up without

them. Revolutionaries must have good moral qualities, without which they would not be able to lead the people, however talented they may be. He pointed out that revolutionary morality is a new kind of morality, a great kind of morality, which does not care for personal honours but concerns itself only with the common interests of the Party, the nation and humanity.

Widely studied and disseminated, the above documents contributed greatly to the ideological remoulding and education of cadres and Party members into revolutionaries loyal to the Party and the people, thus helping to step up the resistance and national construction.

To wage a people's war, President Ho and the Party Central Committee saw to the *building up of the people's armed forces* with three kinds of troops: regulars, regionals and guerillas. This was the core of the armed struggle by the whole people. President Ho stressed the strategic role of the militia and guerillas: "The militia, self-defence units and guerillas are a force of the whole nation, an invincible force, an iron wall of the Fatherland. However fierce an enemy may be, he will collapse when he runs into this force, this wall." To step up the people's war, the three kinds of troops should rely on the people, cling to the people, and engage in closely concerted actions; the armed forces should fight the enemy both with military force and by political and economic means.

In building up the army, President Ho paid great attention to political and ideological education, so as to make our army a real people's army, enjoying the confidence, admiration and love of the people. He often said: The army stems from the people and fights for the people; "army and people are like fish and water", so the army should defend the people's lives and property, it should not take anything, even a needle or a length of thread, from the people; wherever it is stationed, it should help the local people increase farm production. In fighting, our troops should display bravery, ingenuity and resourcefulness; they should emulate each other to kill the enemy with weapons taken from him, wipe out his vital forces and develop our own strength. President Ho visited many army units, attended conferences summing up campaign experience, and sent letters of encouragement to cadres and soldiers. In case of difficulties, he pointed out the way in which to overcome them; in case of victories, he advised our troops not to grow complacent, but to strive to improve these victories and win greater ones. He took constant interest in the material and moral life of our troops. He initiated the movement of "selling rice to treat the troops", with a view to mobilizing the people to serve the front and the army and push forward the resistance. He took care of disabled soldiers and families of war martyrs, giving instructions to the authorities and calling on the people to give them assistance in their daily life. Thanks to education and care from President Ho and the Central

Committee, the people's armed forces, which had been only a small force at the beginning, grew up quickly and became a powerful army, which frustrated all the enemy's military plans.

Together with the victories of our people and army in the military field, the people's power assuming the historic task of the dictatorship of the workers and peasants was further consolidated, displaying strong vitality. Not only in the free areas but also in enemy-held areas, our people put confidence in "Uncle Ho's Government". President Ho held that the administration should truly belong to the people, be elected by the people and serve the people. On the one hand, Party leadership should be strengthened in the administration, at various levels of which there should be appropriate numbers of representatives of workers and peasants, on the other hand, the administrative organs should present the character of a broad front representing various sections of the people. He advised administrative officials and employees to act both as representatives and as loyal servants of the people, to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the service of the people; to be exemplary in carrying out Government policies, and heightening their moral qualities: industry, thrift, integrity, uprightness, total devotion to the public interest and complete selflessness, opposing bureaucratism, waste and corruption. He also reminded government officials to study hard and ceaselessly raise their political, cultural and professional standards so as to serve the people ever better.

Our people's war of resistance was part and parcel of the world revolutionary movement. That is why President Ho constantly advocated the *strengthening of international solidarity*. He pointed out: The Vietnamese people should unite with the French working class and people, gain the sympathy and support of the Soviet Union, China and the other socialist countries, of the people in colonial countries and peace-loving people the world over. On January 14, 1950, President Ho declared our readiness to establish diplomatic relations with all countries that would respect the right to equality and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Immediately after that, the Soviet Union, China and the other people's democracies in turn recognized and established diplomatic relations with our country. President Ho educated our cadres and people to combine genuine patriotism with proletarian internationalism, to heighten the spirit of self-reliance, the dynamics, initiative and creativeness of our people and army in fighting and in production, and to oppose passive reliance on outside assistance.

On the basis of the successes achieved, with a view to consolidating and widening the Viet Bac base area, and connecting our country with the brother countries, in September 1950 President Ho and the Party Central Committee decided to launch the frontier campaign. It was the first time our army undertook such a large-scale campaign. President Ho instructed the armed forces to emulate each other in "destroying the enemy and performing exploits," and

be determined to win victory. Travelling miles and miles he himself went to the front and took a direct part in conducting the operations. His presence at the front was a tremendous source of encouragement for our army and people to march forward and fulfil their glorious task.

Inspired by the powerful impetus of our army dashing forward to destroy the enemy, President Ho Chi Minh expressed his feeling in some verses of which the following lines are an example :

*"I walk up the hill, leaning on a stick, to watch
the battleground.*

*Endless mountain ranges support immense clouds.
In its mighty storm, our army can even conquer
the stars Nguu Dau.*

*We vow to destroy the invaders, those dirty
wolves."*

After the frontier victory, with a view to strengthening Party leadership in all fields to step up the resistance, in January 1951, the Second National Congress of the Party was convened in the Viet Bac base area. President Ho pointed out : "Our Congress is a Congress of the resistance. Its political task is to take the resistance to complete victory and build up the Viet Nam Workers' Party"¹.

In the *Political Report* read at the Congress, President Ho summed up the experience of our Party from its birth, recounting the glorious historical

1. Ho Chi Minh : " Letter to the Preparatory Conference", *Documents of the 2nd Party Congress*, Hanoi, 1965, p. 8.

stages it had gone through. He highlighted the major achievements of the world revolution in the first half of the twentieth century and the bright prospects of the revolution in our country.

President Ho affirmed that our Party's line in the war of resistance was absolutely correct. He pointed out both the good points and the shortcomings of cadres and Party members and criticized wrong tendencies, such as pessimism and despair or complacency and impatience. The report exposed the US imperialists' scheme for deeper interference in Indochina, and set forth our chief slogan as follows : " Wipe out the French colonialists and defeat the US interventionists, achieve unity, complete independence, defend world peace."

Giving an analysis of the new situation and tasks, the President stressed that we should develop our forces in every field, especially strengthen national unity and enhance the national tradition of patriotism so as to lead the resistance to victory. He said : " Our people are ardently patriotic. This is a precious national tradition. Whenever our Fatherland is invaded, this patriotism surges up and grows into a powerful wave which surmounts all dangers and difficulties and submerges all traitors and aggressors "¹.

President Ho also pointed out that we should develop friendly relations with the brother countries

1. Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1973, p. 123.

and progressive people in the world, strive to give assistance to the resistance for national salvation of the peoples of Cambodia and Laos, with a view to setting up a front of the Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao peoples. To fulfil the above tasks, the problem of decisive importance was to strive to consolidate and develop the Party, bring it out into the open, and highlight its role, which was to lead the resistance and national construction to complete victory.

The *Political Programme of the Viet Nam Workers' Party* adopted at the Congress was the synthesis of the main ideas in the *Political Report* by President Ho Chi Minh and the report *On the Vietnamese Revolution* by Comrade Truong Chinh. It affirmed the line of people's national democratic revolution advancing to socialist revolution in Viet Nam and elucidated the line of resistance in order to move toward total victory.

Referring to the Viet Nam Workers' Party, President Ho Chi Minh stressed the point of view of the Party and the virtues to be expected of Party members, "The Viet Nam Workers' Party fears no enemy however fierce he may be, and shuns no task however heavy or risky it may be, and is ready to serve as a buffalo, a horse, a faithful servant to the people."

The members of the Viet Nam Workers' Party "can neither be seduced by wealth, shaken by poverty, nor subdued by force"¹. The Congress

1. President Ho Chi Minh's speech delivered on March 3, 1951.

elected a new Central Committee and unanimously elected President Ho Chi Minh Chairman of the Party; Comrade Truong Chinh was re-elected Party Secretary General.

Carrying out the policy of *broadening and strengthening national unity* the Viet Minh and the Lien Viet held a Congress on March 3, 1951, in which it was decided that they would merge into one front. The problem of national unity was of decisive importance for the victory of the anti-French resistance. The more arduous and the fiercer the resistance became, the more the national united front should be consolidated and broadened on the basis of a firm worker-peasant alliance. President Ho advocated unity with all people we could unite with, winning over all people we could win over, rallying all sections of the people, all political parties, mass organizations, nationalities, religious bodies and patriotic individuals within a broad national united front. He stressed that Front members should stand for close and lasting unity, practise criticism and self-criticism, give each other friendly assistance so that everyone could progress. The national united front based on a firm worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the Party was one of the decisive factors in winning victory for the resistance. Summing up the experience in carrying out the policy of broad national unity, President Ho set forth a famous slogan:

"Unity, unity, broad unity,

"Success, success, great success."

Under the leadership of President Ho and the Party Central Committee, national unity became the firm mainstay of the people's democratic regime ; at the same time it grew into steel meshes encircling the imperialists and their henchmen. Speaking at this historic Congress, President Ho said : " Today is a happy day for the whole people and for this Congress, but for myself this happiness is both easy to understand and difficult to describe. As a man who has been striving for long years, together with the distinguished delegates here present, for broad national unity, I now see the forest of unity blooming with flowers and bearing fruit and striking roots that go deep and wide among the whole people. It will know eternal spring."

After the victory of the Frontier Campaign, our resistance forces grew up in every respect ; especially in the military field, our army and people launched large-scale campaigns pushing the enemy deeper into a position of passive defensive. Our foe then resorted to more perfidious schemes and manoeuvres to extricate himself from his predicament. As the resistance entered a decisive stage, in 1952 President Ho and the Party Central Committee decided to start a rectification campaign in the Party, the Army and in work among the masses, with a view to heightening the political and ideological standards of cadres and Party members, of the army and mass organizations, giving them a correct understanding of the

line of people's national democratic revolution, the line of protracted resistance and self-reliance, enabling them to draw a clear line between ourselves, our friends, and the enemy, to overcome individualism and the fear of sacrifices and of hard and protracted fighting, etc. President Ho gave much attention to the rectification classes. He gave talks and wrote letters reminding everyone to study hard and be determined to remould himself in order to be worthy of the confidence of the Party and the people, and be able to take the resistance to victory and national construction to success.

While stepping up the resistance, President Ho and the Party Central Committee paid great attention to fostering the people's forces, primarily the peasants', for " the peasants are a great force of the nation, a very loyal ally of the working class."

" If the resistance and national construction are to be successful, if real independence and unity are to be achieved, it is necessary to rely on the peasants' forces."

In the course of the resistance, President Ho and the Party Central Committee advocated the policy of reduction of land rents and interests, and other policies, especially that of agricultural taxes, aimed at limiting exploitation by the landlords, developing the forces of the peasants, building and consolidating a firm rear base for the resistance.

But as the resistance reached its decisive stage, the slogan "land to the tiller" should be implemented in order to strengthen and consolidate the worker-peasant alliance, develop the people's strength, and lead the resistance to victory. In 1953, President Ho and the Party Central Committee decided to carry out mobilization of the masses, thorough reduction of land rents and interests, and start land reform even during the resistance. In December 1953, under President Ho's chairmanship, the National Assembly adopted the *Land Reform Act*. Speaking on the significance of land reform President Ho pointed out: "It is necessary to free the peasants from the feudal yoke, to develop their strength so that we can mobilize all this great force to serve the resistance and win victory." President Ho and the Party Central Committee defined the Party's class line in the countryside during the land reform as follows: to rely fully on the poor and landless peasants, to unite closely with the middle peasants, to ally oneself with the rich peasants, to destroy the system of feudal exploitation in a gradual and discriminating way, to increase production and step up the resistance.

Thanks to this correct policy, millions of peasants were strongly mobilized for the resistance, the worker-peasant alliance was strengthened, the people's democratic administration and the national united front were consolidated, farm production was increased and the fighting power of the people's army was heightened to an unprecedented level.

During the winter of 1953 and spring of 1954, on the impetus of our victories, our people and army concentrated their forces and attacked the enemy in nearly all theatres of operations, from the Northern delta through Binh-Tri-Thien and the Fifth Interzone to Nam Bo, smashing the enemy's plan to win back the initiative. To crush the last-ditch effort of the French colonialists and US interventionists, in December 1953, the conference of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, presided over by President Ho, decided to wipe out the Dien Bien Phu entrenched camp. President Ho instructed cadres and soldiers to apply consistently the precepts: "activeness, initiative, mobility, flexibility" and "fight with the certainty of winning." He wrote letters to encourage the soldiers and volunteer carriers, and closely watched all the preparations for the campaign. The strategic determination of President Ho and the Central Committee thus developed into the will and action of the whole Party, the whole army and the whole people.

While our troops were squeezing Dien Bien Phu in a vice of steel, and knowing that the French colonialists' will of aggression had been shaken, on November 26, 1953, in an interview with a Swedish journalist, President Ho stated that we were ready to negotiate with the French Government a political settlement to the Viet Nam problem, on the basis of sincere respect by the French Government of Viet Nam's genuine independence. The victories of our

army and people on the battlefield created favourable conditions for diplomatic action. The French Government was compelled to negotiate with our Government at the Geneva Conference on Indochina.

On May 7, 1954, the great victory of our army and people at Dien Bien Phu resounded at the Geneva Conference, steering it along a favourable course. In the meantime, the Party Central Committee held its sixth Plenum (July 1954) with a view to preparing our whole Party, army and people ideologically, politically and organizationally for the new turning point in the revolution. At the conference, President Ho pointed out that the US imperialists were becoming the chief and direct enemy of our people, and proposed to replace the slogan "resist to the bitter end" by that of "peace, unity, independence, democracy". He defined the task of the whole Party, army and people as follows: to win and consolidate peace, to achieve unity, independence and democracy, to smash all schemes of sabotage by the US imperialists.

On July 20, 1954, the Geneva Conference on Indochina ended. The French Government had to sign an armistice on the basis of respect for the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia. Though they were bent on sabotage, the US imperialists also had to pledge themselves to respect the Geneva Agreements on Indochina.

On July 22, 1954, President Ho Chi Minh addressed a nation-wide appeal calling on the people to realize the new situation and the new task of the Party and to make all-out efforts to consolidate peace, achieve reunification and win complete independence and democracy in the whole country. He asserted: "The North, the Centre and the South are all part of our land. Our country will certainly be reunified and our compatriots throughout the country liberated. *To struggle to consolidate peace, achieve reunification and win complete independence and democracy is also a long and hard struggle.*"

The soul of the sacred war of resistance of our nation, President Ho consistently fostered and developed the factors that ensured victory for the resistance. Together with the Party Central Committee, he mapped out a correct and creative line for the war of resistance, while assuming direct leadership of our people and making it possible for them to perform glorious feats of arms with Dien Bien Phu as the final climax which put an end to the war. *For the first time in history, a small and weak colonized country defeated a mighty colonial power, helping to accelerate the process of collapse of the colonial system of imperialism. It was a glorious victory of our people, and concurrently a victory of the forces of peace, democracy and socialism in the world.* "Viet Nam — Dien Bien Phu — Ho Chi Minh" thus became the battlecry of the oppressed peoples and is uttered by the people of the world with pride and admiration.

VI

THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE REUNIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY (1954-1965)

The Dien Bien Phu victory and the successful conclusion of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina inaugurated a new era in the history of the Vietnamese revolution. Peace was restored in Indochina; North Viet Nam was liberated from the imperialist yoke. In an atmosphere of elation, our people assembled at the historic Ba Dinh Square on January 1, 1955 to greet President Ho Chi Minh, the Party's Central Committee and the Government now back in the capital after several years of arduous and heroic resistance. Starting from 1955, in the South of our country, the US imperialists tried their utmost to oust the French colonialists, with the aim of turning that half of our country into a new-type US colony and military base, re-kindling the war and

attacking the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the socialist camp. The US imperialists and their henchmen became the most dangerous and wicked enemy of our people.

In face of the new situation, President Ho Chi Minh and the Party's Central Committee set forth two strategic tasks to be carried out simultaneously: *to build up the North, take it to socialism; to achieve the reunification of the country, and complete the people's national democratic revolution in the whole country.* Both tasks had the same aim: to consolidate peace, reunify the country on the basis of independence and democracy, bring practical contribution to the strengthening of the socialist camp and the safeguarding of peace in Southeast Asia and the world.

After its complete liberation, North Viet Nam must of necessity carry out socialist revolution and build up socialism. This is the necessary law of development of the revolution in the North, and also the requirement of the struggle for the reunification of the country. That was why President Ho Chi Minh and the Party's Central Committee decided that the task of the entire Party and entire people was to speedily build the North into a strong base for the revolution in the whole country.

President Ho Chi Minh made our people see clearly that the struggle for the reunification of the country would be long and arduous but certainly victorious.

When the North had completed the people's national democratic revolution, and passed to the stage of socialist revolution, President Ho Chi Minh said: "The outstanding feature of the transitional period in Viet Nam is for our economically backward agrarian country to advance direct to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development."¹

On the strength of this characteristic, President Ho Chi Minh and the Party's Central Committee stressed that our people's most important task was to build the material and technical base of socialism, gradually take the North to socialism, with modern industry and agriculture and advanced culture and science. In the course of the socialist revolution, we must transform the old economy and build a new, socialist one.

President Ho Chi Minh said: "The socialist revolution is aimed at putting an end to the exploitation of man by man and bringing a decent livelihood to the entire people. This is the greatest and most glorious revolution in the history of mankind, but also the most arduous, complex and difficult revolution." He called on our entire people to strive to increase production, practise thrift, do everything in accordance with the motto: "*more, faster, better and more economically,*" *in order to fulfil and overfulfil the State plan.* He set an example of industry and simplicity, of being the first to think of work and

the last to enjoy oneself. In the years following the restoration of peace as well as in the years of resistance against the French, he was always working hard, methodically, punctually, and kept his love of manual labour. He always lived simply. He lived in a small house; was most of the time dressed in brown cotton clothes and rubber sandals; and, when travelling or receiving guests, donned a simple khaki suit like the one he wore when reading the Declaration of Independence, following the seething days of the August Revolution. He visited nearly all the provinces of the North, from the Quang Ninh mining district to the Viet Bac and Tay Bac autonomous regions. He talked with workers building new factories and dams, scooped water by the side of peasants, and planted trees during the Tet festival, etc. He was a source of great encouragement to our people in their efforts to overcome all difficulties and build a new life.

After the victory of the resistance against the French colonialists, the North had to go through a *period of economic rehabilitation (1955-1957)*, in which the war wounds were healed, the economy stabilized and the first steps made in improving the people's living conditions. President Ho Chi Minh and the Party's Central Committee pointed out that one of the urgent tasks at that moment was to complete the land reform. With the determination of our entire Party and our entire people, land reform in the North was fundamentally completed by the end of 1957. Said the President: "This is a great victory. It opens the way for our peasants to build a decent life for them-

1. Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1973, p. 237.

selves, make a worthy contribution to the rehabilitation and development of the economy, consolidate the North and turn it into a strong base for the struggle to reunify the country."¹

In order to turn our victory to full account in the new stage of the revolution, President Ho Chi Minh stressed the necessity of further strengthening the broad union of the entire people. In view of the new situation and new tasks, and the necessity of rallying new allies to the Front, President Ho Chi Minh and the Party's Central Committee decided to change the *Lien Viet Front* into the *Viet Nam Fatherland Front* and proposed to it a new programme of action aimed at struggling for peace, national unity, independence and democracy in the whole country. At the founding Congress of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front (September 1955) President Ho Chi Minh exposed the real nature of the US-Diem regime, and, using a vivid metaphor, likened it to a boulder barring our way: if we joined our efforts, he said, it would surely be pushed aside, however big it might be. He drove home to our people that due to our broad union and our determination to consolidate the North and to carry out the programme of the Fatherland Front, the US-Diem regime would certainly be overthrown even if it refused to budge.

During the period of socialist construction in the North and of struggle for the reunification of the

1. Ho Chi Minh: *Selected Works* IV, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1962, p. 190.

country, President Ho Chi Minh and the Party's Central Committee emphasized the necessity of unceasingly consolidating the working class's leading role in the people's democratic State, of strengthening the worker-peasant alliance, the foundation of the State, and of relying on the masses, especially the worker-peasant masses, to build socialism. President Ho Chi Minh pointed out that the foremost task of the working class and the labouring people in the North was to strengthen and consolidate the dictatorship of people's democracy invested with the historic task of the dictatorship of the proletariat, with a view to achieving the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, capitalist industry and commerce, and small trade, building socialism, and forming the new, socialist man. In order to fully reflect the social changes that had happened in the North and the advance toward socialism and the reunification of the country, in January 1957, the National Assembly nominated a Committee for the Amendment of the Constitution with President Ho Chi Minh as chairman. After three years of preparation and study, in December 1959, the draft of the amended Constitution was presented by President Ho Chi Minh to the National Assembly, which unanimously passed it. It was a socialist Constitution which responded to the eager aspirations of our people and pointed out the glorious road taken by them.

Economic rehabilitation once successfully completed, President Ho Chi Minh and the Party's Central Committee led our people onto *the period of socialist*

transformation, and the initial stage of economic and cultural development (1958-1960). For the socialist transformation of agriculture, President Ho Chi Minh insistently recommended that the cadres should proceed diligently but with the utmost caution and care, ensure good quality to their work, strictly respect the principle of voluntariness, and help the co-operatives in organization and management. On August 3, 1959, he called on our peasants to strive on the one hand to develop and consolidate mutual-aid teams and co-operatives, and on the other, to emulate one another in improving technique, these measures being the "two legs" of agriculture which would take it on a rapid advance.

By the end of 1960, the transformation of agriculture through the organization of lower-level co-operatives was completed in the main. The campaign for the socialist transformation of private capitalist industry and trade and handicrafts had also brought good results. With these successes, socialist relations of production had been established throughout the North of our country.

In the task of national construction, President Ho Chi Minh called on our people to rely mainly on their own efforts, while greatly valuing the support and assistance of the brother countries. He constantly urged our people to *couple genuine patriotism with proletarian internationalism* both in the people's national democratic revolution and in the socialist revolution. During his visits to the Soviet Union, China

and Mongolia in June 1955, and to the other socialist countries in 1957, President Ho Chi Minh was warmly welcomed by the people of the brother countries, who expressed wholehearted support to our people's socialist construction in the North and their struggle for the peaceful reunification of the country.

President Ho Chi Minh paid great attention to the development of friendly relations with nationalist countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, especially with neighbouring Laos and Cambodia. He repeatedly reminded us of the duties of the DRVN and the Vietnamese people to the peoples struggling against colonialism in any form, for national independence.

Progressive people in the world set great store by the friendly visits by our government delegation headed by President Ho Chi Minh to India, Burma (February 1958) and Indonesia (February 1959), regarding them as great contributions to the development of friendly relations among peace-loving countries in Asia and to the preservation of peace in Asia and the world.

In the two International Conferences of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow (November 1957, and November 1960), our Party delegation headed by President Ho Chi Minh made positive contributions to a summing-up of the strategic and tactical questions of world revolution and to defining the universal laws of socialist revolution and of socialist construction. Feeling great concern about

the dissensions in the international communist and workers' movement, President Ho Chi Minh did his best to contribute to the preservation of unity among the brother parties and countries on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. At the same time, he took great care to educate our cadres, Party members and people, urging them to maintain their spirit of independence and sovereignty, develop genuine patriotism and proletarian internationalism, preserve unity in the international communist movement, defend the Soviet Union, China and the other brother socialist countries. President Ho Chi Minh's stand expressed the stand and attitude of our Party with regard to international questions: to struggle perseveringly to preserve the purity of Marxism-Leninism, oppose modern revisionism, the main threat, and at the same time oppose dogmatism and sectarianism. He always believed that the differences of opinion in the international communist movement would be settled, that Marxism-Leninism would certainly triumph and that the socialist camp and the international communist movement would restore its unity, become ever more powerful, and strongly push forward the revolutionary cause of the world's working class and people.

Early in 1960, in an atmosphere of ardent emulation by our entire people to greet the 30th founding anniversary of our Party and the coming Party Congress, President Ho Chi Minh wrote an article entitled "*Thirty years of activities by the Party*." This is a historic survey of our Party's activities during 30

years of valiant struggle and glorious victories. In this important article, he outlined the fundamentals of the strategy and tactics of our Party through the various stages of the revolution, which showed a creative application of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions in Viet Nam. Analyzing the causes of the past successes of the Vietnamese revolution, he pointed out the decisive factors accounting for the victory of the people's national democratic revolution and the socialist revolution in our country.

In face of the heavy tasks in the present period, President Ho Chi Minh stressed the necessity of exalting the leading role of the Party, strengthening it ideologically and perfecting it organizationally. Our Party is a party in power which has to deal not only with great problems such as economic and cultural construction but also the smaller ones of the people's everyday life. President Ho Chi Minh paid great attention to the political and ideological education of cadres and Party members, to elevating their morality and style of work so as to make them worthy leaders and loyal servants of the people. At each turning point in the revolutionary struggle, he and the Party's Central Committee used to organize rectification-and-education classes to raise the political and ideological level of cadres and Party members and meet in time the requirements of new revolutionary tasks. He frequently urged cadres and Party members to study Marxism-Leninism, consolidate their proletarian stand, love labour and observe strict

work discipline. He pressed us to get rid of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois thoughts, of individualism, heighten our revolutionary virtues, develop our collective spirit, our sense of organization and discipline. He also urged cadres and Party members to improve their cultural, scientific and technical standard, in order to make positive contributions to national construction.

President Ho Chi Minh often reminded Party branches and Party cells that they must carefully and steadily extend Party membership, attach great importance to increasing the number of members of proletarian origin, and at the same time pay due attention to the new forces: young people, women, members of ethnic minorities, etc. He taught cadres and Party members that unity and oneness of mind within the Party must be strengthened, so as to make it a powerful vanguard leading our working class and our people toward victory in socialist construction and in the struggle for the reunification of the country.

To emphasize the glorious achievements of the Party over the past decades, he said:

*“Our Party is as great as the vast sea and the high
mountain,
Thirty years of struggle and victory testify to
many noble ideals.
Our Party is the embodiment of virtue and civil-
isation.”*

It means unity and independence, peace and well-being.

The services rendered by the Party are truly immense,

The thirty years of struggle of the Party make a golden chapter in our history.”

In September 1960, the Third National Congress of the Party was held in Hanoi. In his opening speech, President Ho Chi Minh pointed out: “This Congress is a Congress for socialist construction in the North and for the peaceful reunification of the country.” He made a general appraisal of the achievements and the causes of successes, especially the great changes which had occurred in our country since the Second National Congress. These successes proved that the Party line had been correct and that our Party fully deserved the confidence of our entire people from North to South. He officially defined the two strategic tasks of the Vietnamese revolution in the North and in the South in the present period and brought out the close relationship between the Vietnamese revolution and the world revolution. He warmly praised the sentiments of proletarian internationalism animating the socialist countries and the communist and workers' parties in the world, which were joining their efforts in the struggle for peace and security to all peoples, for socialism. He said:

*The whole world is but one family,
Proletarians everywhere are brothers.*

President Ho Chi Minh stressed that to ensure victory for the revolutionary cause, the class character and vanguard character of the Party must be further enhanced, ideological education work in the Party must be intensified, and great efforts must be made to learn from the experience gained by the brother parties and apply it in a creative manner. He called on the entire Party to unite closely and to inspire the entire people with vigorous determination to fulfil all the glorious tasks awaiting us.

At the Congress, a *Political Report* of the Party's Central Committee was read by Comrade Le Duan. The *Political Report* like the *Resolution* adopted by the Congress was a powerful beacon showing the way to socialism and the reunification of the country.

The Congress mapped out the general line of the socialist revolution in the North and the line of the national democratic revolution in the South, approved the orientation and tasks of the first five-year plan for the development of the economy and culture in a socialist way, decided on measures to consolidate the Party, adopted the new *Party rules*, and elected a new Central Committee. President Ho Chi Minh was re-elected Chairman of the Party's Central Committee, and Comrade Le Duan was elected First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee.

In the light of the Resolution of the Party's Third Congress, the people in the North, their enthusiasm and confidence still further enhanced, pushed forward socialist revolution and socialist construction, striving

to carry out the triple revolution: revolution in the relations of production, technical revolution, ideological and cultural revolution. Together with the Party's Central Committee, President Ho Chi Minh took great pains to expound the positions, inter-relation, and effects of these three revolutions, pointing out that the technical revolution was crucial.

President Ho Chi Minh paid especial attention to the ideological and cultural revolution aimed at educating and transforming the labouring masses and turning out men with socialist virtues, productive skills and a high scientific and technical standard. He said: "In order to build socialism, communism, it is necessary to produce socialist, communist men." He taught us that we must heighten revolutionary virtues, resolutely struggle against individualism, cultivate the spirit of collective masterhood, display industry and practise thrift to build the country, maintain close contact with the masses, and wholeheartedly serve the supreme interests of the revolution, of the Fatherland.

President Ho Chi Minh attached great importance to the education of the youth, those who were to continue the revolution, the future masters of society. Moreover, they are responsible for giving guidance to the children. When opening the "tree-planting Tet" in the spring of 1960, President Ho Chi Minh compared tree-planting and afforestation to tending the "young shoots" of the nation: "To serve our interests in ten years' time, we must grow

trees ; to serve our interests in one hundred years' time, we must raise men." He greatly valued the role of the women, a great force in socialist construction. He insisted that we must respect the women and be grateful to the Vietnamese mothers who had brought up their children to become national heroes. He also reminded the women that they should struggle to maintain equal rights with men, get rid of their inferiority complex and the tendency to rely on men, that they should develop a spirit of independence, of self-confidence, and assume their duties of mistresses of the country.

While the people in the North were steadily building for themselves a comfortable and happy life, the people in the South were intensifying their struggle against the US imperialists and their lackeys, winning more and more victories. To further strengthen the unity of the entire people, further mobilize our people's forces with a view to successfully carrying out the immediate tasks, President Ho Chi Minh convened a *Special Political Conference* on March 27, 1964.

Making his report to the Conference, President Ho Chi Minh spoke of the heroic struggle of the labouring people of the North to build up the country in the past ten years, which showed the excellence of the socialist regime and greatly stimulated the patriotic struggle of our countrymen in the South. He praised the resolute and indomitable spirit of struggle and warmly greeted the victories

of the South Viet Nam army and people who, under the leadership of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, were dealing hard blows at the US imperialists and their lackeys and proving themselves to be worthy of the title "Brass Wall of the Fatherland". He highly praised the repeated brilliant victories of the socialist countries and of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America in their struggle against imperialism headed by US imperialism.

His appeal: "Let everyone of us redouble his efforts to show our gratitude to our kith-and-kin in the South" has become an action slogan urging our entire people to resolutely advance toward still greater victories.

While giving guidance to the people of the North in building a fine socialist regime, President Ho Chi Minh always thought of our Southern compatriots. The people of our entire country will never forget what he said: "As long as the country is not reunified, as long as our countrymen's sufferings continue, I can neither sleep well, nor eat with any appetite."¹ He is the symbol of our people's determination to reunify the country, which he expressed in these moving words: "North and South belong to the same family, they are blood brothers and can never be separated."²

1. Ho Chi Minh: *Selected Works* III, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1961, p. 75.

2. Ho Chi Minh: *Selected Works* IV, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1962, p. 54.

But since 1954, the US imperialists had been carrying out a policy of intervention and aggression in South Viet Nam, sabotaging the Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam and the unity of our country. They have set up a fascist dictatorial puppet administration, and repressed all people who love their country, peace and democracy, in an attempt to force the South Vietnamese people to accept their neo-colonialism. They have committed on the beloved soil of South Viet Nam crimes that neither heaven nor earth could forgive."

In face of this situation, the South Vietnamese people had no other alternative but to resolutely take up arms and fight for their survival. Even in the darkest years under the regime of fascist terror of the US imperialists and their lackeys, our countrymen in the South kept their confidence in President Ho Chi Minh and the Party's Central Committee, their thoughts always turned to the socialist North.

While the enemy was frantically repressing the revolution, the revolutionary leaders of the South made active preparations and mobilized the masses for partial uprisings, smashing the weakest link in the enemy administrative system — the village administration. Beginning in early 1960, "concerted uprisings" broke out, marking an important leap forward and leading to the founding of the *South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation* on December 20, 1960.

Frightened by the unabated vigorous struggle of the armed forces and people of South Viet Nam, the US imperialists in mid-1961 started a "special war", a part of US global strategy. Using the experience gained during the August Revolution and the resistance against the French colonialists, the South Vietnamese people have been fighting with extreme heroism, smashing all war schemes and manoeuvres of the US imperialists and their puppets, overthrowing the Diem-Nhu fascist dictatorial regime, and pushing the US aggressors deep into a tunnel with no end in sight. President Ho Chi Minh closely followed and gave continuous encouragement to the victorious struggle of the armed forces and people of South Viet Nam. He said: "The present situation in the South is clear evidence of the inevitability of US failure in this 'special war'. The 'special war' which the US imperialists are experimenting in South Viet Nam has been defeated, and will fail in any other place. This is the international significance of the patriotic struggle of our southern compatriots with reference to the national liberation movements in the world."¹

For so many years past, the image of beloved South Viet Nam was constantly in President Ho Chi Minh's heart. His love for the people of South Viet Nam was truly boundless and found expression in much of what he did, from the great care and

1. Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1973, p. 287.

attention he bestowed on Southern children regrouped in the North to the solicitude with which he tended the milk-apple tree presented to him by our Southern compatriots. Tears came to his eyes whenever he heard of massacres of our countrymen in the South by the US imperialists and their lackeys. He was greatly moved when he embraced the first delegates of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation coming to visit the North in October 1962. He said, "The image of South Viet Nam is treasured in my heart. As long as the Fatherland has not yet been reunified and our Southern compatriots still suffer, I can neither eat nor sleep in peace."

So long as the liberation of South Viet Nam was not achieved, he thought he had not yet accomplished his task. That was why when he learned of the intention of the National Assembly to award him the Gold Star Order, the highest decoration in the DRVN, he expressed his gratitude to the National Assembly and proposed, "We shall wait for the day when the South is completely liberated, the country peacefully reunified, North and South reunited into one family. Then the National Assembly will allow our Southern compatriots to hand me this high decoration. Thus all our people will be happy and elated."

Since his return to the country, President Ho Chi Minh had never had the chance to visit our countrymen in the South but his image was in the

hearts of all patriotic South Vietnamese, from the townspeople to the Tay Nguyen highlanders, from the men and women detained in dark jails to the combatants on the battlefields. An old mountaineer dying in a concentration camp held tight in his hand a portrait of President Ho Chi Minh, and told his children and grand children to follow President Ho to the end. A young Southern boy shot down by the enemy as he was helping revolutionary cadres to escape, shouted as he fell: "Long live Uncle Ho!" A woman facing a firing-squad cried out: "President Ho Chi Minh will remain in our hearts forever!" President Ho Chi Minh has given the South Vietnamese people enlightenment, strength, courage, faith, and caused them to record brilliant victories. Responding to his appeal, the 14 million South Vietnamese have united into a steel-like whole, and smashed all aggressive operations by the US imperialists and their lackeys, determined to carry out President Ho Chi Minh's will:

"Our people is one, Viet Nam is one. Our people will certainly overcome all difficulties and achieve at all costs the reunification of the country, the reunion of North and South under the same roof."¹

During the years of tough fighting against US imperialist aggression in South Viet Nam, President Ho Chi Minh cherished the intention to go South

1. Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1973, p. 258.

to visit his compatriots and comrades. With firmness, he insisted on doing this. Seeing that he was advanced in years and that his health had begun to fail, the comrades in the Political Bureau suggested that he would go there only when total defeat had been inflicted on the US aggressors.

From time to time, he asked how preparations for the trip were proceeding. In face of his firm determination, the responsible comrades finally had to tell him that the way to the South was very difficult.

In the last years of his life, weak though he was, President Ho Chi Minh kept up physical training by walking and by climbing slopes, often very steep. He wanted to keep his strength and, with determination, continued that training with a view to his eventual journey to the South. Since 1968, feeling that his health was failing visibly, he requested that he be told immediately of the arrival in the North of any comrades from the South so that he could meet them. In this way, many cadres and combatants coming from the South had the chance to talk with him. At each of such meetings President Ho Chi Minh always made a thorough inquiry about the situation in the South. He was greatly elated by these visits.

VII

THE NATIONAL RESISTANCE TO AMERICAN AGGRESSION

(1965-1969)

Faced with impending defeat in their aggressive war in South Viet Nam, the US imperialists madly started an air and naval war of destruction against the North and rashly switched from the "special war" to a "limited war" in the South. They thought that with their bombs and shells they could intimidate our people and shake our determination to struggle against US aggression, for national salvation. But they were grossly mistaken!

To deal with the serious situation created by the US imperialists' new war schemes and acts, President Ho Chi Minh and the Party's Central Committee resolved to mobilize the forces of the entire Party, the entire army and the entire people to fight and defeat the US imperialists' aggressive war in any circumstances, in order to defend the North, liberate

the South, complete the people's national democratic revolution in the whole country, and advance toward the reunification of the Fatherland.

President Ho Chi Minh and the Central Committee pointed out that the urgent task of the revolution in the North was to make a timely shift, in both thinking and organization, in building the economy and reinforcing national defence so that the North might be powerful enough to meet the needs of its own defence while assisting the revolution in the South and at the same time continuing to build the material and technical basis for socialism. President Ho Chi Minh's appeal "Be resolved to defeat the US aggressors" again resounded like bugles sounding the charge, exhorting our entire people to stand up and fight to defend the Fatherland's independence and freedom and safeguard our people's sacred cultural and spiritual values:

"The war may last five, twenty or more years; Hanoi, Haiphong and other cities and enterprises may be destroyed; but the Vietnamese people will not be intimidated! Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom. Once victory is won, our people will rebuild their country and make it even more prosperous and beautiful."¹

President Ho Chi Minh again spent many sleepless nights. He followed the progress made by the combatants and the population at the front, at the

same time attending to the thousand daily tasks in the rear. He reminded the cadres that they must pay due attention to the building of air-raid shelters and the evacuation of old people and children. He visited localities attacked by enemy planes, and saw to it that the people's life return to normal. He visited navy and air force units, sent New Year bouquets to armymen at their combat positions. He was the symbol of the iron will and the unshakable unity of our army and people.

The founder of the Viet Nam People's Army, President Ho Chi Minh closely followed the growth of the people's armed forces. In the very first days after the restoration of peace, he stressed that the common duty of the army and the people was to strive to strengthen the armed forces to defend the Fatherland and preserve peace. For this purpose, armymen must emulate one another in political and technical studies, observe strict discipline and austerity and at the same time actively take part in production work, and devotedly help the population build the economy and consolidate the rear. President Ho Chi Minh repeatedly told our armymen that to build a modern regular army, they must by dint of study and practice master the techniques of modern weapons and war means. But he made it clear that the essential factor for the victory of the people's war is man, the political and moral factor, the Party's line of waging people's war and building people's armed forces.

Fully prepared ideologically and organizationally and maintaining high vigilance, our armed forces, in

1. Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1973, p. 308.

full battle-readiness, hit back vigorously at the enemy in the very first battles. The line of people's war laid down by the Party and President Ho Chi Minh was developed on a new basis, in new forms, to deal with the US imperialists' air and naval war of destruction ; it called for participation by the entire people in fighting against enemy planes and warships, in civilian defence work, in transport and communications, etc. The challenge banner with the inscription "*Resolved to defeat the US aggressors*" awarded by President Ho Chi Minh starting from March 1965 to the units with the most remarkable achievements during a set period, has stimulated the entire army and entire people to perform brilliant feats. Determined to knock the enemy down and storm forward, our army and people are resolved to carry out President Ho Chi Minh's teachings : "Be loyal to the Party, devoted to the people, ready to fight and to endure sacrifices for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, for socialism. Fulfil any task, overcome any difficulty, defeat any enemy."

Overcoming war-time difficulties, socialist construction in the North continued to make firm steps forward. Our economic potential was strengthened, our national defence forces were developed to an unprecedented level. The socialist system had brought new possibilities, immense sources of power to the people's war. Among the working people, political and moral unity was increasingly consolidated. It was the epic of the Vietnamese people's extreme heroism, creative labour and intelligence. It was the work of

millions of working people, the result of heroic acts in fulfilling everyday tasks. President Ho Chi Minh paid great attention to and promptly commended these acts, which, though inconsiderable when viewed individually, evinced, however, great revolutionary virtues worthy of our people's glorious traditions. Starting in 1959, he awarded thousands of badges bearing his effigy to encourage meritorious people and deeds in all branches, all social strata, all localities in the North. As a further educational measure, in mid-1968 he initiated a movement in which meritorious people and meritorious deeds were fostered and set up as examples, and which was to be a basic measure for training new men — socialist men — capable of defeating the aggressors and taming nature.

While giving a strong impulse to the war of resistance against US aggression, for national salvation, President Ho Chi Minh continued to educate our cadres, Party members and people to heighten their revolutionary virtues and socialist morality. Early in 1969, he wrote an important article entitled : "*Enhance revolutionary virtues, wipe out individualism.*" He instructed our entire Party, army and people to couple study with a re-examination of their thoughts and actions during the past years, develop their good points and their achievements, overcome the shortcomings in their thinking, morality and style of work, and strive to achieve still greater victories for the revolution.

With a view to developing the potential of the great rear area of the war of resistance against US aggression, for national salvation, President Ho Chi Minh attached great importance to consolidating and perfecting socialist relations of production in the countryside. In April 1969, the National Assembly passed and ordered the carrying into effect of the Rules for high-level agricultural cooperatives. This important document embodied the line, policies and fundamental principles of our Party and State in ensuring the collective masterhood of the cooperative peasantry. While these Rules were being worked out, President Ho Chi Minh had instructed the responsible organs to ensure democratic discussions, to listen to the peasants' opinion, and make them feel that these Rules were of their own making. He himself made corrections in the draft Rules on agricultural cooperatives and wrote an introduction to this document which was extensively distributed in the country. He closely followed the dissemination of the Rules and the measures taken for their implementation and instructed Party committees and government organs at different levels to give effective assistance to the cooperatives for carrying the new Rules into effect.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Great Socialist October Revolution, President Ho Chi Minh wrote an article entitled "The Great October Revolution Opened the Way to the Peoples' Liberation" (October 1967). This was one of the important

works by President Ho. In it, he spoke of the rich experience gained in the October Revolution, which opened the way to the liberation of the oppressed peoples and that of humanity, and inaugurated a new historical period, that of transition from capitalism to socialism and communism. From the teachings of Lenin and the rich experience of the October Revolution, President Ho Chi Minh drew lessons of a principled and universal character, which would ensure the complete liberation of the working class and oppressed peoples.

Those were lessons in building a *genuine revolutionary party of the working class*, which knows how to apply Marxism-Leninism in an independent and creative manner to the concrete conditions of our country. The Party must build the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the working class, and on this basis, rally all revolutionary and progressive forces into a *broad national united front* to oppose the common enemy. In the struggle against the enemy of the class and the nation we must pit revolutionary violence against counter-revolutionary violence, seize power and maintain it, combine armed struggle with political struggle, wage a long, arduous and valiant people's war to defeat the aggressors. After seizing power, the foremost task of the working class is to unceasingly strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat to fulfil the historical tasks of the revolution. The Party must continuously hold high the banner of revolutionary heroism, cultivate an *uncompromising revolutionary spirit*, and fight to the

end for national independence and socialism. *We must couple patriotism with proletarian internationalism* both in the national-liberation revolution and in the socialist revolution, and carry out Lenin's sacred appeal: "Proletarians of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite!"

Those were lessons drawn from our people's arduous and victorious struggle, in the light of the Great October Revolution. The article "*The Great October Revolution Opened the Way to the Peoples' Liberation*" was an important contribution to the theoretical treasury of the Vietnamese revolution and the world revolution. It clearly set forth President Ho Chi Minh's strategic and tactical thought, his line of thorough revolution which has taken the Vietnamese people into the most glorious period of their history, the period of independence, freedom and socialism.

While intensifying and extending their aggressive war against Viet Nam, the US imperialists have been clamouring about their "peace goodwill", "willingness to negotiate without any pre-condition," etc., in an attempt to deceive public opinion in the world and in the United States. President Ho Chi Minh resolutely exposed the deceitful manoeuvres of the US government and denounced its policy of "negotiating from a position of strength", a policy aimed at forcing our people to lay down arms and give up their legitimate demands. In a letter sent to the Heads of State of the socialist countries and a number of other

countries on January 24, 1966, and a letter to the American people dated December 23, 1966, he pointed out that aggression by the United States was the only source and the direct cause of the serious situation in Viet Nam and South-East Asia. Displaying both flexibility and firmness, he clearly brought out our people's just stand and repeatedly attacked the US imperialists on the diplomatic front, reducing them to a more and more passive and embarrassing position. Our people's war of resistance was given increasingly active support by progressive opinion all over the world. In the United States itself, the aggressive ruling clique was increasingly isolated.

Waging a war of resistance against US aggression, for national salvation, our people stand at the front line of the struggle of the working class and people of the world for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism. President Ho Chi Minh pointed out that the revolutionary and peace-loving forces in the world had become stronger than the forces of aggressive imperialism. He affirmed: "It is clear that the US imperialists are being defeated!"

While calling on our people to struggle for their sacred national rights, President Ho Chi Minh constantly reminded us of our internationalist duties. For this reason, we have won wholehearted assistance and support from the peoples of the socialist countries, the world's peoples and progressive people in the United States. On behalf of the Vietnamese people, President Ho Chi Minh on many occasions voiced

thanks for this cordial support. A united front of the people of the world for support to the Vietnamese people, against US aggression, has been formed. Viet Nam has become a matter of conscience for our time.

After severe setbacks in both zones of our country, the US administration was forced to put an unconditional end to the bombing and shelling on the entire territory of the DRVN, beginning from November 1, 1968, and to enter into talks with the delegates of the DRVN and of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation at the Paris four-party conference. After four years of extremely heroic struggle, our army and people had won a glorious victory, *the US imperialists' war of destruction against the North of our country had been defeated*. Said the President: "This is a victory of our Party's correct revolutionary line, a victory of our ardent patriotism, of our people's unity and determination to fight and win, a victory of our fine socialist regime. This is a common victory of our armed forces and people in both the North and the South. This is also a victory of the people of the brother countries and of our friends all over the world." President Ho Chi Minh called on our army and people in both zones to further heighten their vigilance, increase their strength, launch continuous attacks and win complete victory: "So long as a single aggressor remains on our soil, we must fight on to wipe him out."¹

1. Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1973, p. 347.

While waging a war of destruction against the North, the US imperialists greatly intensified the war in the South. But the South Vietnamese people firmly maintained and further developed their offensive position, successively defeating all strategic counter-offensives by the enemy. Affirming our people's determination to get the better of the US expeditionary corps, President Ho Chi Minh said: "Even if the American are to bring in hundreds of thousands more troops and drag more satellite troops into this criminal war, our army and people will defeat them."

In August 1967, an Extraordinary Congress of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation met and adopted a Political Programme with a view to further broadening the national united front against US aggression, and winning total victory for the South Vietnamese people's revolutionary cause. Greeting this political event, President Ho Chi Minh said: "This is a programme of broad national union, a programme of resolute struggle to completely defeat the US aggressors and their valets, the traitors."

The whole process of development of our people's struggle through different stages led to the earth-shaking general offensives and uprisings in the Tet of the year Mau Than (early 1968).

As President Ho Chi Minh had said in his New Year's greetings: "This spring will outshine all previous ones." The army and people of South Viet

Nam dealt telling blows at the US and puppet forces and won unprecedentedly brilliant victories in all fields, which marked a turning point in our people's great war of resistance.

At the high tide of these general offensives and uprisings, the *Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces* came into being. President Ho Chi Minh regarded this as "a great victory of the policy of national union against US aggression, for national salvation, which further exposes the true colours of the US imperialists and their lackeys as aggressors and traitors and drives them into increasing isolation."

The army and people of South Viet Nam followed up those victories with more attacks, upsetting the enemy's strategic dispositions, pushing him deeper into a defensive and passive position, encircling and attacking him on all fronts. In response to the extensive requirements of the war of resistance and the aspirations of the entire people, on June 6, 1969, the patriotic forces held a Congress of Representatives of the South Vietnamese people and elected a *Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam* and a *Government Advisory Council*. In a message of June 11, 1969, President Ho Chi Minh and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, on behalf of the DRVN Government, conveyed greetings to the Provisional Revolutionary Government and the Advisory Council: "The holding of the Congress of Representatives of the South Vietnamese People and

the establishment of revolutionary power over the whole territory of South Viet Nam prove that our countrymen in the South are resolved to strengthen their unity, perseveringly struggle to be masters of their own destiny, create new favourable conditions and advance towards total victory.

This important historic event greatly rejoices our compatriots both at home and abroad and further strengthens their confidence; our brothers and friends all over the world are giving us still greater support".

From the great victories won by our army and people during several decades of struggle full of hardships and sacrifices, President Ho Chi Minh drew an important conclusion. "In the present conditions which are favourable to the revolutionary movement, any nation, even a small one, which is closely united and resolutely fighting according to a correct political and military line, and is furthermore enjoying active support and assistance from the socialist camp and revolutionary peoples in the world, such a nation will certainly be able to defeat any imperialist aggressor, including the ring-leader, US imperialism".¹

Our people's struggle will have to go through more difficulties and hardships. The US imperialists are very warlike and stubborn. Our entire Party, army and people must strengthen their unity,

1. Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1973, p. 335.

heighten their revolutionary vigilance, enhance their fighting spirit, and perseveringly carry on their war of resistance to attain at all costs the goal of the revolution as set by President Ho Chi Minh in his 1969 New Year message :

*For the sake of Independence and Freedom,
Let us fight till the Americans quit and the pup-
pets topple.*

Forward! Fighters and compatriots!

*North and South once reunited, could there be
a happier spring?*

This revolutionary resolve was reiterated by President Ho Chi Minh in his July 20, 1969 Appeal :

“ The defeat of the US imperialists is already evident, yet they have not given up their evil design of clinging to the southern part of our country. Our armed forces and people throughout the country, millions as one man, upholding revolutionary heroism and fearless of sacrifices and hardships, are determined to carry on and step up the war of resistance, with the firm resolve to fight and win, till the complete withdrawal of US troops and the total collapse of the puppet army and administration, in order to liberate the South, defend the North and ultimately achieve peaceful reunification of the country.”¹

1. Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1973, p. 357.

VIII

UNCLE HO WILL LIVE FOR EVER IN OUR HEARTS

While our people in both South and North were gaining great victories in their struggle against US aggression, sad news came : President Ho Chi Minh was taken ill !

In the latter part of his life, despite his age and failing health, he had remained perfectly lucid and played his full part in leading the Party and the State. But in 1969, his health rapidly declined. When he fell ill, the Party's Central Committee got the best medical care for him. Day and night, doctors and professors attended him.

While our cadres and people together with our friends the world over were hoping for an early recovery, on the morning of September 4, 1969, a *Special Communique* of a Joint Meeting of the

Party's Central Committee, the National Assembly's Standing Committee, the Government Council and the Presidium of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front Central Committee, was issued, carrying the sad news : President Ho Chi Minh had passed away at 9.47 a.m. on September 3, 1969, after a very serious heart attack, at the age of seventy-nine.

In face of this grievous loss for our whole nation, the Party's Central Committee launched an Appeal calling on the entire Party, army and people to contain their sorrow and turn it into revolutionary deeds, and to valiantly march forward and fulfil their tasks in order to effectively show our love for President Ho Chi Minh and our gratitude to him. The *Appeal and Last Tribute of the Party's Central Committee* helped us fully understand the immense contribution of President Ho Chi Minh and showed us where to direct our efforts in order to carry on his great work and realize his ideal and wish. The *Appeal* said :

" A great patriot, a loyal disciple of Karl Marx and Vladimir Ilich Lenin, Comrade Ho Chi Minh upheld the spirit of uncompromising struggle against imperialism, and dedicated all his life to the liberation of the working class, the nation and mankind, for independence and freedom, for socialism and communism. He upheld the spirit of independence and sovereignty, creatively applied Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of our country and closely com-

bined genuine patriotism with proletarian internationalism. He embodied the combination of the finest traditions of our Vietnamese nation with the radically revolutionary ideology of our time — Marxism-Leninism.

*" His life is a shining example of revolutionary heroism, militant solidarity, simplicity, modesty, industry, thrift, uprightness, integrity, total dedication to the public interest and complete selflessness. He has been closely associated with the splendid successes of the Vietnamese revolution ever since our Party came into being, and his name personifies the most glorious epoch in the history of the Vietnamese nation."*¹

A State funeral commission was set up, headed by Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee. The Party's Central Committee and the government decided that a seven-day mourning period (September 4 — 10, 1969) would be observed throughout the country and that President Ho Chi Minh's funeral would be held in accordance with our most solemn rites.

Our entire people from North to South, from the delta to the mountain regions, regardless of age, nationality and religious belief, were deeply grieved and shocked. Said the Party's Central Committee in its Last Tribute :

1. Appeal of the Viet Nam Workers' Party Central Committee, September 3, 1969.

“ Our nation, our people and our land gave birth to President Ho Chi Minh, the great national hero, and he, in turn, has covered them with glory.”

President Ho Chi Minh had revived the spiritual values of the Vietnamese nation. His national-salvation work had wiped off all the shame and humiliation of nearly a century of national enslavement. He was the standard-bearer in the emancipation of our labouring people. For the first time in Viet Nam's history, the people in the northern half of our country have liquidated all forms of oppression and exploitation and are building socialism. In him we find great revolutionary work combined with noble virtues.

The mourning ceremony for President Ho Chi Minh began with great solemnity on the morning of September 6, 1969 at Ba Dinh Hall. Lying in state in a glass coffin, he was clad in his habitual simple and faded khaki suit. His rubber sandals, which had travelled with him over the length and breadth of the country, and now a sacred relic, were placed in a glass case at his feet. Endless columns of people, their faces showing infinite sorrow, filed past day and night. Delegates of all levels, branches and circles, coming from all corners of the country, were paying him their last tribute. They included delegates from the heroic great fighting front who brought with them the Southern people's deep feelings for President Ho Chi Minh; those of the scores of minority nationalities living on Vietnamese soil, who all are

deeply grateful to him for having cemented national unity in the common struggle for independence, equality and freedom; and those of overseas Vietnamese, whose minds are constantly turned to the Fatherland. In seven days, more than 200,000 came to pay their last tribute to President Ho Chi Minh.

More than 40 foreign delegations, representing the Central Committees of Communist and workers' parties and the peoples and governments of the brother and friendly countries came to attend President Ho Chi Minh's obsequies and share our Party's and people's sorrow.

Memorial ceremonies for President Ho Chi Minh were solemnly held in Hanoi and in all localities in the North. In every government office, in every home, his portrait was hung at the best place. In the fire of the war, our Southern fellow-countrymen held memorial ceremonies in various ways. On the morning of September 8, 1969, the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation Central Committee, the Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the South Viet Nam Republic and the Government Advisory Council held a solemn memorial ceremony in the resistance base.

Despite the enemy's opposition, the population in the US-puppet-controlled areas found their own ways to mourn President Ho Chi Minh.

How grieved our Southern fellow-countrymen were when their hopes to welcome him to the South

one day were dashed. With profound love and deep gratitude, the fourteen million of them pledged that they would resolutely fight on, overcome all hardships and sacrifices, and fulfil their duty as the "Brass Wall of the Fatherland": to defeat the American aggressors and their lackeys.

Together with our people, all progressive mankind expressed their regret and affection for President Ho Chi Minh. More than 22,000 messages and letters from 121 countries were sent to Hanoi expressing condolences to our Party, our National Assembly, our Government, the Viet Nam Fatherland Front, and our people. They included messages from the heads of socialist states and many other states, leading bodies of Communist and workers' parties, mass organizations in various countries and international democratic organizations, democratic and progressive personalities.

The socialist states and ten nationalist states held mourning or national funeral ceremonies for President Ho Chi Minh. In his memory, many governments decided to name after him public works and places such as schools, factories, streets, squares. The Palestinian People's Democratic Front for Liberation launched on September 6, 1969 an offensive dubbed Operation Ho Chi Minh to wipe out Israeli aggressors. A number of mass organizations in various countries took his name. A number of Communist and workers' parties recruited a "Ho Chi Minh batch" of members, studied his

Testament and popularized his activities and his works. In the world, people of various nationalities and political beliefs came and paid their last tribute to President Ho Chi Minh at our embassies and diplomatic representations abroad, wrote condolences and signed the book of mourning. In many countries the population held meetings, memorial ceremonies or marched in processions carrying his portrait. In the United States and several West European countries, the people turned memorial ceremonies in honour of President Ho into demonstrations against the aggressive war of the American imperialists in Viet Nam.

Those are expressions of the fine, deep and sincere feelings of the world's peoples for President Ho Chi Minh, their noble-hearted friendship with our people, and of the precious political support of the whole of progressive mankind for our nation's just struggle against US imperialist aggression.

Those deep feelings are due to the fact that President Ho Chi Minh's great revolutionary work is closely linked to the achievements of our Party, of our people, of the Vietnamese nation now fighting heroically and winning glorious victories, thus setting a brilliant example of struggle for national liberation, independence and freedom, and socialism. President Ho Chi Minh is also venerated for his great contribution to the world revolution and to the communist

and international workers' movement, for his noble virtues, his high-minded and generous feelings toward our brothers and friends around the world.

His life, perfect and pure, is a rare example. His virtues and style of work are a model for a revolutionary fighter's life and activities. His spirit, noble qualities and revolutionary work are respected even by his enemies.

The memorial ceremony for President Ho Chi Minh was held with the greatest solemnity at Ba Dinh square in Hanoi, on September 9, 1969, in the presence of over 100,000 people. Comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee read the *Last Tribute* of the Party's Central Committee and President Ho Chi Minh's *Testament*.

Departing from us, President Ho Chi Minh left a historic *Testament*. It contains his last recommendations, and expresses his deep love for and firm confidence in our Party, our people and the future generations. His *Testament* reflects a high sense of responsibility and a great concern for the future of our nation, our camp and mankind.

His *Testament* gives a sweeping view of the strategic tasks of the Vietnamese revolution, points out the crucial problems that our Party and people must grasp in order to complete their revolutionary work. The strength contained therein is fully expressed in the iron will and determination to fight to the end for national liberation and the reunification of the country. It is not by chance that it begins

with these words: "Even though our people's struggle against US aggression, for national salvation, may have to go through more hardships and sacrifices, we are bound to win total victory."

First of all, he stresses our Party's role in uniting, organizing and leading our entire people in their victorious struggle. He recommends that we should preserve the tradition of *unity* in the Party, on the basis of "establishing broad democracy and practising *self-criticism and criticism* regularly and seriously." Ours being a Party in power, each cadre, each Party member must be "deeply imbued with revolutionary morality, and show industry, thrift, integrity, uprightness, total dedication to the public interest and complete selflessness. Our Party should preserve absolute purity and prove worthy of its role as the leader and very loyal servant of the people."

Paying constant attention to the "fostering of future revolutionary generations," he attaches particular importance to the training and education of the young people into our successors, both "red" and "expert", in the building of socialism.

He expresses deep faith in our people's heroism, courage, enthusiasm and industry, and reminds us that our Party "must work out effective plans for economic and cultural development so as to constantly improve the life of our people."

With regard to our struggle against US aggression, for national salvation, he anticipates that it

"may drag on. Our people may have to go through more hardships and sacrifices." However, he stresses that "whatever happens, we must keep firm our resolve to fight the US aggressors till total victory.

"Our mountains will always be, our rivers will always be, our people will always be,

"The American invaders defeated, we will rebuild our land ten times more beautiful."

Those are pressing recommendations to our Party, and earnest appeals to our entire Party, army and people to engage in patriotic emulation, completely defeat the American aggressors and successfully build socialism in the North, realize a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam and contribute to the world peoples' struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism.

To his last breath, he was concerned about his responsibility to the international communist and workers' movement as well as to the great socialist family. He recommends that our Party should "do its best to contribute effectively to the restoration of unity among the fraternal parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, in a way which conforms to both reason and sentiment."

President Ho Chi Minh departed from this world with an easy mind, having no regrets whatsoever, for all his life he had lived in total dedication to the

public interest and complete selflessness, in simplicity and frugality. He was only sorry he had not been able to serve the Fatherland, the revolution and the people even more. Departing from us, he left us profound feelings: "boundless love for the entire people, Party and army, for the youth and children."

His Testament is a document with a highly synthetic and *principled* character, a scientific Marxist-Leninist world outlook and a communist view of life. It is a most concentrated embodiment of President Ho Chi Minh's thought, virtues and style of work. It sets a shining example for us to follow for ever. It also lashes at our enemies and fills them with fright. Hoping to find division and confusion in our Party and people, they face instead a steel rampart formed by a nation whose miraculous strength has been developed by their love and gratitude to President Ho Chi Minh, and who are determined to unite and fight for the fulfilment of his sacred wishes.

The *Last Tribute* of the Party's Central Committee begins with words of sorrow:

"Our beloved and venerated President Ho Chi Minh is no more!

"This is a tremendous loss, our grief is boundless!"

In the presence of President Ho Chi Minh's spirit, on behalf of our entire Party, people and army, Comrade Le Duan made these five vows:

1. For ever to carry aloft the banner of national independence, to fight and defeat the US aggressors, to liberate the South, defend the North, and reunify the country in fulfilment of his wish.

2. To go on devoting all our strength to the realization of the lofty ideal of socialism and communism that he set for our working class and people, so as to achieve prosperity for our land and happiness for our countrymen.

3. With all our hearts and strength, to preserve the unity of the Party as we would the apple of our eye, to increase the fighting strength of the Party, the nucleus of national unity, and to ensure total victory for the revolutionary cause of the Vietnamese working class and nation.

4. To constantly enhance the pure internationalist sentiments shown by President Ho Chi Minh, do our utmost to contribute to the restoration and development of solidarity and unity in the socialist camp and among the fraternal parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism ; to strengthen solidarity and friendship among the Indochinese peoples ; to extend wholehearted support to the revolutionary movement of all peoples, to make an active contribution to the struggle of the world's peoples for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism.

5. All our life to learn from his virtues and style of work, to foster revolutionary virtues, fearlessly face hardships and sacrifices, to temper our-

selves into fighters loyal to the Party and the people, worthy of being his comrades, his disciples. Following his example, our entire people and youth pledge to do their best to steel themselves into new men, masters of their country, masters of the new society, and to carry his invincible banner to the final goal.

The whole of Ba Dinh square, the whole city of Hanoi resounded with shouts full of iron resolve : " We vow ! " These pledges echoed throughout the land, voicing the determination of our entire nation to *turn grief into strength* in order to fight and defeat the US aggressors and their lackeys.

By performing these five vows, our entire Party, army and people will carry out *President Ho Chi Minh's sacred Testament* and continue his great work. The Party Central Committee's *Last Tribute* said :

" President Ho Chi Minh is no more ! But he left us an extremely precious legacy. This is the Ho Chi Minh epoch, the most brilliant one in our nation's glorious history. This is the era of independence and freedom for the Fatherland, the era of socialism in our country. "

Though having departed from this world, he left us the factors ensuring complete victory for the Vietnamese revolution. He left us a body of leaders he formed and fostered, his close comrades-in-arms and able disciples. He left us a most valuable theoretical and ideological treasure, works that sum up the rich experience of the Vietnamese revolution in the past half-century.

President Ho Chi Minh will live for ever in the hearts of our people and the world's peoples. He will live for ever in the revolutionary work of our people and the people of the world!

With boundless grief, our entire Party and people realize all the more clearly that it is their duty to strive to be worthy of President Ho Chi Minh's work: *"To closely unite around the Party's Central Committee, to be determined to act upon President Ho Chi Minh's Testament, to persist in and step up our struggle against US aggression, for national salvation, to liberate the South, defend the North, advance toward the reunification of the country, to boost socialist building in the North and contribute to the revolutionary work of the world's working class and people."*¹

After President Ho Chi Minh passed away, the Political Bureau of the Party's Central Committee decided to organize a drive to study and act upon his Testament, aimed at making our people realize even more fully his immense achievements and his fine and pure revolutionary virtues, thereby enhancing their pride, confidence and determination to continue his revolutionary work.

To show our resolve to act upon President Ho Chi Minh's Testament and strengthen the ranks of the Communists fighting under his glorious banner, on March 6, 1970, the Political Bureau of the Party's

1. Directive of the Political Bureau of the Party's Central Committee — September 29, 1969.

Central Committee decided to launch a drive to improve the quality of Party members and admit a Ho Chi Minh batch of new members. Following a decision of the Party's Central Committee, the youth, pioneer and children's organizations in our country now have the honour of bearing President Ho Chi Minh's name. This is a source of pride and at the same time a heavy responsibility for our young people; they must do their best to carry on Uncle Ho's great work in a worthy manner.

Turning grief into revolutionary action, the armed forces and people of South Viet Nam pledge to strengthen their unity and push forward to annihilate the US imperialist aggressors and their lackeys, smash the American scheme for "Vietnamization" of the war, strengthen the militant solidarity among the people of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea, build a great aggregate strength and take the anti-US resistance war for national salvation of the peoples of Indochina to total victory.

Turning grief into revolutionary deeds, the people of North Viet Nam are forging ahead in their patriotic emulation, increasing their labour productivity and work efficiency, defending and building socialism in the North, in the first place successfully fulfilling the 1969-1970 State plan, struggling shoulder to shoulder with their Southern fellow-countrymen against US aggression, for national salvation, and fulfilling their duty as the great rear area toward the heroic fighting front.

In realization of President Ho Chi Minh's sacred *Testament*, our people, millions as one and with great revolutionary fervour, are determined to resist the US aggressors, save the country and build socialism.

Feeling infinite sorrow and regret over the death of President Ho Chi Minh, we are determined to realize his ultimate wish: "Let our entire Party and people closely join their efforts, build a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam, and make a worthy contribution to the world revolution."¹

CONCLUSION

President Ho Chi Minh devoted his whole life to the revolutionary cause of our people and the world's peoples. The great triumph of the Vietnamese revolution is associated with the life full of intense activity, hardships and sacrifices, the extremely noble and glorious life of President Ho Chi Minh, the great national hero, the infinitely beloved and venerated leader of the Vietnamese working class and nation, an outstanding fighter and a prominent militant of the international communist movement and the nation-liberation movement. The prouder we are of President Ho Chi Minh, the prouder we are of our glorious Party, our heroic nation, and our industrious and brave people.

His noble thoughts and virtues will forever illuminate the path for us to march forward courageously.

This year*, we commemorate the 85th anniversary of President Ho Chi Minh's birth at a moment when the people in both zones of our country are winning splendid achievements. Particularly in South Viet Nam, the armed forces and people are launching relentless attacks and powerful uprisings and win-

1. President Ho Chi Minh's *Testament*.

* 1975 (Ed.)

ning strategically great victories. In memory of him and in order to express our gratitude to him, our entire party, entire army and entire people must endeavour to learn from his thoughts, virtues and style of work, act upon his sacred Testament and fulfil the five pledges taken by the Central Committee of our Party.

Our revolutionary cause has fundamental advantages but is at this point still beset with difficulties: poverty and backwardness—the legacy of the past, the aftermath of the prolonged imperialist war, at a time when our people have to simultaneously perform two strategic revolutionary tasks. Developing our people's tradition of courageous and persevering struggle and acting upon President Ho Chi Minh's teaching: “Be ready to fulfil any task, overcome any difficulty, defeat any enemy”, we pledge ourselves to strengthen unity, heighten revolutionary vigilance, make the utmost efforts, surmount all difficulties, confidently march forward along the revolutionary path charted by President Ho Chi Minh, and continue to struggle successfully to fulfil his noble ideal and wish.

Eternal gratitude to our great President Ho Chi Minh !

Let us live, fight, work and study in accordance with the example set by him !

E R R A T A

Page	Line	Instead of	Please read
7	9	Front broad	From abroad
33	15	in all field-	in all fields
36	15	forets	forests
122	27	I work as	I work at
123	5	As far as the eyes could see	As far as the eye could see
143	5	was hung by a thread	hung by a thread
174	28	and article	an article
179	3	culturel	cultural
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